25¢

Adventure

MAGAZINE

A POPULAR PUBLICATION

JAN.

THE FINEST IN FICTION FOR MEN

SON OF THE SWORD

A TALE OF BLOOD ON THE NILE

by POUL ANDERSON

MANY OTHERS —

AROUND THE WORLD AND THROUGH THE AGES

Send Only $1

WE WILL SEND ANY RING YOU CHOOSE FOR APPROVAL UNDER OUR MONEY BACK GUARANTEE

Christmas Diamonds

Give a Diamond this Christmas! Wear one of these brilliant Diamond Rings yourself! Indicate your selection on the coupon below and forward it with $1 plus a few brief facts about yourself such as age, occupation, etc. We will open an account for you and send your selection to you under our Money-Back Guarantee. Pay the postman the required Down Payment and the balance in easy monthly payments. If you are not satisfied, we will refund all payments made — upon return of the merchandise within 15 days.

SEND FOR FREE CATALOG!

A252/C207 $150
9 Diamond Engagement Ring, 10 Diamond Wedding Band. 14K yellow or 18K white Gold. Send $1, pay $14 upon delivery, 13.50 a month.

B301 $129
Fancy Princess Ring with 17 brilliant Diamonds. 14K yellow or white Gold. Send $1, pay $12 upon delivery, 11.60 a month.

C250 $75
Wedding Ring set with 5 matching Diamonds in 14K yellow Gold setting. Send $1, pay 6.50 upon delivery, 6.75 a month.

A322 $125
5 Diamond Engagement Ring. Smart new setting of 14K yellow or 18K white Gold. Send $1, pay 11.50 upon delivery, 11.25 a month.

D308 $129
Handsome Ring for Men. 2 Diamonds, round simulated Ruby. 14K yellow Gold. Send $1, pay $12 upon delivery, 11.60 a month.

A234/C127 $100
5 Diamond Engagement Ring, 5 Diamond Wedding Band. 14K yellow or white Gold. Send $1, pay $9 upon delivery, $9 a month.

D153 49.50
Twin Ring for Men with 2 Diamonds, pear-shaped simulated Ruby. Set in 14K yellow Gold. Send $1, pay 3.95 upon delivery, 4.45 a month.

B51 39.75
Sweetheart Ring with 2 Diamonds, center simulated Ruby. Heart setting of 14K yellow Gold. Send $1, pay $3 upon delivery, 3.57 a month.

A104/C53 59.50
Lock Set. 3 Diamond Engagement Ring, matching 3 Diamond Wedding Band. 14K yellow or 18K white Gold. Send $1, pay 4.95 upon delivery, 5.35 a month.

All Prices Include Federal Tax

L. W. Sweet

MAIL ORDER DIVISION FINLAY STRAUS, INC.
25 W. 14th St., NEW YORK 11, N. Y. Dept. P31

SEND $1 WITH COUPON—PAY DOWN PAYMENT UPON DELIVERY—EASY MONTHLY PAYMENTS

L. W. Sweet, 25 West 14th St. (Dept. P-31)
New York 11, N. Y.

Enclosed find $1 deposit. Send me No._____
Price $_____ Upon delivery, I agree to pay $_____ and required balance monthly thereafter until full price is paid, otherwise I'll return selection within 15 days and you will refund my money.

NAME_____

ADDRESS_____

CITY_____ STATE_____

"Impossible," they say

MAYBE they're right about money growing on trees. But here's a success-proved fact: a career firmly rooted in good, practical *training* bears rich and wondrous fruit. Money, promotions, prestige, security—many of the things you really want in life.

Do you want the rewards that come from *training?* I. C. S. can help you—just as it has helped thousands of men who today are leaders in business and industry. You have over 400 courses to choose from. And the coupon brings full information. Why not mail it *today?*

INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS

60th Anniversary

BOX 3275-G, SCRANTON 9, PENNA.

Without cost or obligation, please send me full particulars about the course BEFORE which I have marked X:

Business and Academic Courses
- ☐ Accounting ☐ Advertising
- ☐ Bookkeeping
- ☐ Business Administration
- ☐ Business Correspondence
- ☐ Business Law
- ☐ Cartooning
- ☐ Certified Public Accounting
- ☐ Commercial ☐ Commercial Art
- ☐ Cost Accounting
- ☐ Fashion and Book Illustration
- ☐ Federal Tax ☐ First Year College
- ☐ Foremanship
- ☐ Good English ☐ High School
- ☐ Higher Mathematics
- ☐ Industrial Supervision
- ☐ Motor Traffic
- ☐ Personnel—Labor Relations
- ☐ Postal Civil Service ☐ Retailing
- ☐ Retail Business Management
- ☐ Salesmanship ☐ Secretarial
- ☐ Sign Lettering
- ☐ Stenography ☐ Traffic Management

Aeronautics Courses
- ☐ Aeronautical Engineer's, Jr.
- ☐ Aircraft Drafting and Design
- ☐ Aircraft Mechanic
- ☐ Engine Mechanic

Air Conditioning and Plumbing Courses
- ☐ Air Conditioning ☐ Heating
- ☐ Plumbing
- ☐ Refrigeration
- ☐ Refrigeration, Domestic
- ☐ Refrigeration & Air Conditioning
- ☐ Steam Fitting

Chemical Courses
- ☐ Chemical Engineering
- ☐ Chemistry, Analytical
- ☐ Chemistry, Industrial
- ☐ Food-Plant Sanitation
- ☐ Petroleum Production & Refining
- ☐ Plastics ☐ Pulp and Paper Making

Civil Engineering and Architectural Courses
- ☐ Architecture ☐ Architectural Drafting
- ☐ Bridge and Building Foreman
- ☐ Building Estimating
- ☐ Civil Engineering
- ☐ Contracting and Building
- ☐ Highway Engineering
- ☐ Reading Structural Blueprints
- ☐ Sanitary Engineering
- ☐ Structural Drafting
- ☐ Structural Engineering
- ☐ Surveying and Mapping

Communications Courses
- ☐ Electronics ☐ Practical Telephony
- ☐ Radio, General ☐ Radio Operating
- ☐ Radio Servicing
- ☐ Television
- ☐ Telegraph Engineering

Electrical Courses
- ☐ Electrical Drafting
- ☐ Electrical Engineering
- ☐ Electric Light and Power
- ☐ Lighting Technician
- ☐ Practical Electrician
- ☐ Power House Electric
- ☐ Ship Electrician

Diesel Engines Courses
- ☐ Diesel Engines
- ☐ Internal Combustion Engines

Mechanical Courses
- ☐ Forging ☐ Foundry Work
- ☐ Heat Treatment of Metals
- ☐ Industrial Engineering
- ☐ Industrial Instrumentation
- ☐ Industrial Metallurgy
- ☐ Machine Shop ☐ Mechanical Drafting
- ☐ Mechanical Engineering
- ☐ Mold-Loft Work
- ☐ Patternmaking—Wood, Metal
- ☐ Reading Shop Blueprints
- ☐ Sheet-Metal Drafting
- ☐ Sheet-Metal Worker
- ☐ Ship Drafting ☐ Ship Fitting
- ☐ Tool Designing ☐ Toolmaking
- ☐ Welding—Gas and Electric

Railroad Courses
- ☐ Air Brake ☐ Car Inspector
- ☐ Diesel Locomotive
- ☐ Locomotive Engineer
- ☐ Locomotive Fireman
- ☐ Locomotive Machinist
- ☐ Railroad Section Foreman
- ☐ Steam-Diesel Locomotive Engineer

Stationary Engineering Courses
- ☐ Power Plant Engineering
- ☐ Stationary Fireman
- ☐ Stationary Steam Engineering

Textile Courses
- ☐ Cotton Manufacturing
- ☐ Loom Fixing ☐ Rayon Manufacturing
- ☐ Textile Engineering
- ☐ Woolen Manufacturing

Name_____ Age_____ Home Address_____

City_____ State_____ Working Hours_____ A.M. to_____ P.M.

Present Position_____ Employed by_____

Special tuition rates to members of the Armed Forces. Canadian residents send coupon to International Correspondence Schools Canadian, Ltd., Montreal, Canada.

NEXT ISSUE OUT DECEMBER 19th

Adventure

MAGAZINE

Registered U. S. Patent Office

JANUARY, 1952 Vol. 125, No. 4

CONTENTS

SON OF THE SWORD ..... Poul Anderson 10
A tale of blood on the Nile—and of man's two deathless greeds. . . .

ROVER-YEARNING (Verse) ..... C. Wiles Hallock 33
"To be a rover forevermore. . . ."

BLOOD SKY ..... Charles J. Doyle 34
McGafferty could either kill you—or die for you!

SEA HARVEST (Verse) ..... John Bunker 47
"The surging surf has a song to sing. . . ."

HARK, AFRICA! ..... Joel Townsley Rogers 48
An unforgettable jungle novelette—of the white man who came to dinner!

Copyright 1937, by Popular Publications, Inc.

NO MAN'S PASSAGE ..... Steve Hail 82
A desperate ship and a reckless crew—on a voyage to nowhere.

KILLER'S DARK ..... Verne Athanas 92
There's no night as dark as the dark of a bullet. . . .

THE CAMP-FIRE ..... Where readers, writers and adventurers meet 6

ASK ADVENTURE ..... Information you can't get elsewhere 91

ASK ADVENTURE EXPERTS ..... The men who furnish it 100

LOST TRAILS ..... Where old paths cross 113

Cover painted for Adventure by Murray Hirsch
Ejler G. Jakobsson, Editor

Any resemblance between any character appearing in fictional matter, and any person, living or dead, is entirely coincidental and unintentional.

Published bi-monthly by Popular Publications, Inc., at 1125 E. Vaile Ave., Kokomo, Indiana. Editorial and Executive Offices, 205 East 42nd Street, New York 17, N. Y. Henry Steeger, President. John J. McVarish, Treasurer. Entered as second-class matter at the Post Office at Kokomo, Indiana. Copyright, 1951, by Popular Publications, Inc. This issue is published simultaneously in the Dominion of Canada. Copyright under International Copyright Convention and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. All rights reserved, including the right of reproduction, in whole or in part, in any form. Title registered in U. S. and Canadian Patent Offices. Single copy 25 cents. Annual subscription for U. S. A., its possessions and Canada, $1.25; other countries, 50c additional. All correspondence relating to this publication should be addressed to 1125 E. Vaile Ave., Kokomo, Indiana, or 205 E. 42nd Street, New York 17, N. Y. When submitting manuscripts, enclose stamped, self-addressed envelope for their return, if found unavailable. The publishers will exercise care in the handling of unsolicited manuscripts, but assume no responsibility for their return. Printed in the U. S. A.

Bewitching

She'll be your "Dream Girl" You'll "Bewitch" her with it

Daring "BLACK MAGIC"

"DREAM GIRL" She'll look alluring, breathtaking, enticing, exotic. . . . Just picture her in it . . . beautiful, fascinating SEE-THRU sheer. Naughty but nice. . . . It's French Fashion finery . . . with peek-a-boo magic lace. . . . Gorgeously transparent yet completely practical (washes like a dream . . . will not shrink). Has lacy waistline, lacy shoulder straps and everything to make her love you for it. A charm revealing Dream Girl Fashion. . . . In gorgeous Black.

SATISFACTION GUARANTEED
or your money back

DREAM GIRL FASHIONS, Dept. 59
318 Market St., Newark, New Jersey

Please send me **DREAM GIRL** gown at $9.95. If not entirely satisfied, I'll return within 10 days for full cash refund.

( ) I enclose $9.95 cash, check or money order, send postage prepaid (I save up to 90c postage). (You may get it at our store too!)

( ) I will pay postman $9.95 plus postage. Check size wanted:

32 34 36 38 40 IN BLACK ONLY
(If you don't know the size send approximate height and weight)

Name .....

Address .....

City ..... State.....

Heaven Sent

Heaven Sent Oriental Magic

Out of the pages of the Arabian Nights comes this glamorous sheer Harem pajama. You'll look beguiling, alluring, irresistible, enticing. You'll thrill to the sleek, clinging wispy appeal that they will give you. He'll love you for transplanting you to a dream world of adoration centuries old. Brief figure hugging top gives flattering appeal to its daring bare midriff. *Doubled at the right* places, it's the perfect answer for hostess wear. Billowing sheer bottoms for rich luxurious lounging. He'll adore you in this charm revealing Dream Girl Fashion. In wispy sheer black.

SATISFACTION GUARANTEED
or your money back

DREAM GIRL FASHIONS, Dept. 235
318 Market St., Newark, New Jersey

Please send "Heaven Sent" pajamas at $9.95. If not entirely satisfied, I'll return within 10 days for full cash refund.

( ) I enclose $9.95 cash, check or money order, send postage prepaid (I save up to 90c postage). (You may get it at our store too!)

( ) I will pay postman $9.95 plus postage. Check size wanted:

32 34 36 38 40 IN BLACK ONLY
(If you don't know the size send approximate height and weight)

Name .....

Address .....

City ..... State.....

Black Sorcery

Daring Bare-back She'll be entranced with it

Your Dream girl will be an exquisite vision of allurement, charm, fascination and loveliness in this exotic, bewitching, daring bare-back filmy sheer gown. It's delicate translucent fabric (washes like a dream) will not shrink.
Have Paris at home, with this cleverly designed halter neck that ties or unties at the flick of a finger. Lavishly laced midriff and peek-a-boo bottom. She'll love you for this charm revealing Dream Girl Fashion. In exquisite black sheer.

SATISFACTION GUARANTEED
or your money back

DREAM GIRL FASHIONS, Dept. 335
318 Market St., Newark, New Jersey

Please send **BLACK SORCERY** gown at $9.95. If not entirely satisfied, I'll return within 10 days for full cash refund.

( ) I enclose $9.95 cash, check or money order, send postage prepaid (I save up to 90c postage). (You may get it at our store too!)

( ) I will pay postman $9.95 plus postage. Check size wanted:

32 34 36 38 40 IN BLACK ONLY
(If you don't know the size send approximate height and weight)

Name .....

Address .....

City ..... State.....

THE CAMP-FIRE

Where Readers, Writers and Adventurers Meet

AMONG the compensations of editing *Adventure Magazine,* top rating should go to an alert readership that does not let us pass unchallenged. The record over the years is impressive, and we're happy to note that in a world which is growing more and more accustomed to being imposed upon, *Adventure's* readers have not forgotten how to fight.

The brand very much in the fire this month is *l'affaire* Chivington, touched off by George C. Appell's well-documented article on the gentleman, *Hell on Horseback,* in our September issue. The striking factor in the controversy appears to be, however, that both sides of the question can be equally well documented, as our reader mail attests.

So spirited, in fact, was the reaction of many readers to this piece that we feel that in fairness to all who may have read *Hell on Horseback,* the views of those who oppose Mr. Appell's conclusions should be thoroughly aired on these pages. While space does not permit us to include a fraction of the letters received, we've used the best judgment we're capable of in selecting the two herewith published.

Mr. W. H. Hutchinson writes from California:

> I will not argue with Mr. Appell on the simple fact, implied by him but not stated clearly as such, that Sand Creek proved the white man to be able to apply his intelligence to barbarity in such manner as to shame the Plains Tribes. It is one of the blacker spots in our dealings with the original freeholders and is on a parity with the exploits of the Scalp Hunters who roached Apache at so much a head for the Chihuahua and Sonora governments. Insofar as his portrayal of the conduct of Chivington's troops is concerned, I have no great quibbles.
>
> I will argue very definitely with him on several of his facts. I will take decided exception to his conclusions of the far-reaching effects of the Sand Creek massacre.
>
> The facts first. Chivington did not capture a halfbreed about the middle of November and force him to guide the command to Sand Creek. Chivington left Denver about the middle of November with the bulk of the Third Regiment and three companies of the First Colorado. He reached Fort Lyon in the afternoon of November 28th, and took departure about 2000 hours that same night for his forced march. His guides were James P. Beckworth, the fabulous mulatto mountain man then in his 66th year, and Charles Bent, a half Cheyenne son of Colonel William Bent, the great trader of the southern Plains.
>
> The John Smith whom Mr. Appell places as Chivington's guide was captured inside the Cheyenne-Arapahoe camp after the fight was over. He was with his father, John Simpson "Blackfoot" Smith, a trader and interpreter. Young Jack Smith was indeed killed by the soldiers some twenty-four hours after the engagement started, but one of the Coloradoans then there says "by accident at which nobody showed any regret."
>
> My sources are Professor W. S. Campbell, (Stanley Vestal), Dr. Leroy Hafen, Irving Howbert, and George F. Willison; also,

(Continued on page 8)

Give famous THORESEN Watches for CHRISTMAS JOY!

Sold DIRECT-TO-YOU on 10 day FREE trial

Buy with confidence! Thoresen watches are precision-built by world renowned Swiss craftsmen. Triple checked for accuracy. Try at our risk! Price promptly refunded within 10 days of receiving—unless fully satisfied! **UNLIMITED Service Guarantee** exclusive of parts and **Gift Case** with each watch. Supplies limited. Send check or money order for quck AIR MAIL delivery.

Our Best Value

The ONE and ONLY GENUINE Recipro-Register CHRONOGRAPH

- It's different
- Split-Second Timer
- Extra-thin
- Nationally Advertised
- Exclusive with Thoresen's

A unique watch of incredible accuracy! **PRECISION** made in the highest traditions of Swiss craftsmanship! The **RECIPRO-REGISTER*** CHRONOGRAPH computes distance and speed of races, sports, photography, planes, lab experiments, workshop operations, etc. **AUTOMATICALLY!** Calibrated down to 1/5th second! It actually "remembers" the result for you while watch keeps on going. It's **DIFFERENT!** Sold **DIRECT**, exclusively by THORESEN. Compare it with cheap, inferior chronographs! You will never be satisfied with anything less perfect!

OVER 25 QUALITY FEATURES

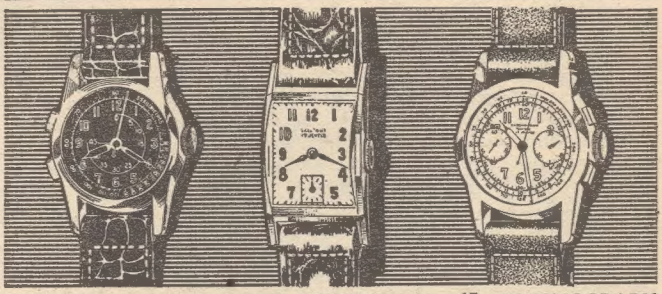
- 17 Full Jewel-Swiss
- Recipro-Register Triple Dial
- Incabloc Protection
- Anti-Magnetic
- It "Remembers"
- Nivarox Hairspring
- Beryllium Balance
- Exceptional Quality

MOISTURE AND SHOCK RESISTANT

Three multi-function dials automatically coupled and synchronized for hours, minutes, seconds and 1/5th second. Contact clutch to start computation and brake to freeze Recipro-Register result. "Erases" back to zero. Hairline sweep-second hand. Radium-active night-glo numerals. Kiersite unbreakable crystal. **ELECTRONICALLY TIME TESTED FOR ACCURACY.** A smart, thin timepiece of functional beauty—the pride and joy of every executive, physician, radioman, aviator, photographer, technician, sportsman.

ORDER DIRECT—SAVE $50

Featured in Esquire, Popular Science, etc. Recent list.....$79.95
Reduced for quick sales to.....29.95
18 Karat Rolled Gold Plate de Luxe model 34.95
NO EXTRAS! These prices include tax. Send check or money order for quick delivery. Get genuine Recipro-Register for enduring service.



Jr. Chronometer

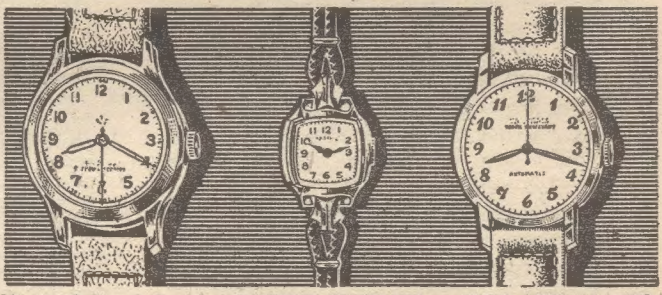
Times races, autos, planes, sports, etc. 2 push buttons. Telemeter & Tachometer readings. Luminous dial. Unbreakable crystal. Sweep-second. The ideal gift for scientific-minded boys.
Price tax-paid... **$6.95**

Men's GOLD Watch

17 Jewel Swiss De-Luxe—curved hi-dome crystal. Raised Gilt numerals. Amazing accuracy. Superb styling. Perfect gift for executives. Case is 14 Karat genuine gold. Formerly $49.95. Now
Tax Paid **$21.95**

17 Jewel CHRONOGRAPH

A bargain indeed! Not to be confused with the Recipro-Register, but equal to or better than most 17 jewel chronographs on the market. Yours at a rockbottom price for this quality.
Tax Paid **$23.90**



Water & Shock Resist

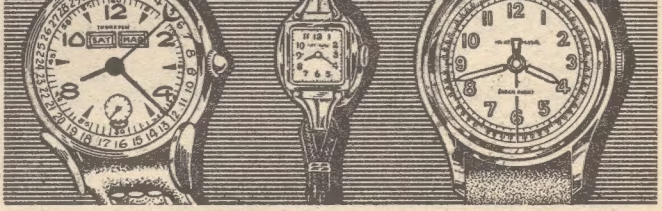
Drop it... bang it... swim with it! Doubly protected by shock absorber and gasket sealer. 7 Jewels. Luminous. Unbreakable crystal. Sweep-second.
Tax paid only.... **$9.95**
Thin 17 Jewel Super-Accuracy model—all stainless screw back.
Tax paid price.. **$17.95**

LADIES' 17 JEWEL

14 Karat Genuine Gold case. One of the finest 17 jewel ladies' watches. So dainty and stylish! It'll steal her heart this Christmas. Shop compare, appraise with ordinary "gold filled" watches selling for $49.50 and more! Thoresen's tax-paid price, no extras.. **$21.50**

FULL AUTOMATIC

The carefree watch. Set it, then forget it! Winds itself as you wear it. Incabloc Shock and Water Resist! All stainless steel, screw back. Radium dial. Sweep second. One of the thinnest. 17 jewel movement by Schild—Winner of 3 gold medals. Was $79.95.
Now tax paid.... **$29.88**



THIN CALENDAR

Incredibly thin . . . gives month, date of month, weekday, hour, minute, second with amazing accuracy. Case in 18 Karat Rolled Gold Plate, stainless steel back. One of the world's great timepieces. Engineered by prize-winning Schild.
Now Tax paid.... **$49.50**

LADIES' 7 JEWEL

So tiny and accurate! This is a splendid ladies' watch in rolled Gold Plate. Thrill her! Triple-tested for precision. Beautifully gift packaged. Compare with watches selling for twice as much. Satisfaction guaranteed. **$14.00**

SHOCK PROTECTED

Juniors Pride! So rich in appearance and it has a dependable 7 jewel movement and sleek, sturdy chromed case, luminous numerals, sweep-second, unbreakable crystal. Best of all, it's shock protected! Our special price **$8.95**

Send check or Money Order for QUICK AIR MAIL DELIVERY. Rush orders to:

THORESEN DIRECT SALES, Dept. 124N-200, 131 West 33rd Street, New York 1, N. Y.

(Continued from page 6)

J. P. Dunn and the Report of Congressional Committee Investigating the Sand Creek Affair.

As to Chivington himself. Mr. Appell says that "In 1850, as a Methodist minister, he moved from Colorado to Missouri, etc." Gentlemen, if there was a Methodist church in Colorado in 1850, its parishioners were prairie dogs. Also, if there was any white settlement or settlers in Colorado in 1850, I am sure the Colorado Historical Society would like the information. Kansas Territory included Colorado then, and the first permanent white settlements, outside Bent & St. Vrains trading posts, and similar establishments, did not come until 1858 *et seq* with the Gold Rush. Also Mr. Appell overlooks the fact that Chivington, for all his frontier outlook on Indians, fought with gallantry and tactical skill in New Mexico during the Civil War at the battles of La Glorieta and Apache or Pigeon Canyon. Also, that the best contemporary opinion of Chivington, that of Hal Sayre, later a prominent mining engineer in Colorado, sums him up as being: "A crude but good-natured and well-intentioned Irishman."

The dialogue Mr. Appell quotes as between Chivington and Major Colley, Stanley Vestal quotes as between Chivington and William Bent. Me, I don't know, but I've checked Vestal for a long time and found him pretty damned accurate in his Indian war data.

In Chivington's own account of the Sand Creek affair, quoted by Howbert who is, admittedly, an apologist since he was one of the command involved in the action, Chivington presents views expressed by Major Samuel G. Colley, Indian Agent, that nothing would serve his charges so well as a good licking.

Instead of two mountain howitzers, Chivington himself says he had four 12-pound howitzers, manned by cavalry detachments.

Regarding Crazy Horse and his demand for brothels as a condition of peace, the story is cited by Stanley Vestal, *Warpath & Council Fire*, p.193, and attributed directly to Red Cloud, with minor variants.

Finally, Chivington died in Denver as coroner and under-sheriff, according to George F. Willison, the chronicler of Denver and Colorado's early years.

It is when Mr. Appell attributes the warfare on the plains from 1864 to 1884 or later entirely to the Chivington massacre that my hot Brattleboro blood begins to boil. Such a statement, in my opinion, shows either an appalling ignorance of Indian tribal structure and psychology, or a desire to distort knowledge for salable sensation.

For example: The Kiowa and Comanche had raided the Santa Fe Trail and the Texas settlements since both these first began. And they continued so to do until M'Kenzie whipped them in the winter campaign of 1875.

Item: On November 3, 1864, three full weeks before Chivington started for Fort Lyon and Sand Creek, Carson led his New Mex Volunteers down the Canadian to chastise these tribes and got himself whipped to a standstill before Chivington even reached Sand Creek.

Item: In January, 1864, Carson had driven the Navajo out of Canyon de Chelly onto a reservation and this, and the Navajo's desire for loot and booty which caused it, cannot be attributed to Sand Creek.

Item: In July, 1864, General Alfred Sully had a go-round with Sitting Bull and the Sioux far north of Sand Creek, in time and distance.

Item: Mr. Appel disregards the whole unrest of the Plains Tribes, brought about by the Civil War, during the years 1863-64, which unrest is best exemplified by the fact that Black Kettle, some sixty days before Sand Creek, had seven white captives and in his camp, after the massacre, Chivington's men collected almost twenty old white scalps.

Item: In the summer of 1864, Lean Bear, a Cheyenne, was wantonly shot by men under Lt. Eayre, who commanded an independent battery of artillery of Colorado volunteers. By the same token, long before Sand Creek, a friendly camp of Cheyenne and 'Rapahoe near Denver was set upon by a bunch of town toughs, the Bummers, and rape, looting, and murder were the order of the day.

Item: To say that but for Sand Creek, our Indian troubles would have been, or might have been, confined to a series of running skirmishes with Geronimo is ludicrous. It ignores the fact that the Apache turned their hands against the white man in 1837 and kept it turned until Geronimo was talked in. It ignores the greatest of the 'Pache war leaders, Mangas Coloradas, Cochise, Victorio, Nana, Juh, Loco, Chato, and the rest, and simply documents the fact that Geronimo, like Sitting Bull, got a good press early.

Item: To draw a connecting line between Sand Creek and the Ghost Shirts of Sitting Bull is to make sounds in the air. It ignores the complex of forces that became operative long after Sand Creek, and it again attributes a working alliance to the Plains Tribes which has never been proven by facts, and which could not have endured for the necessary years simply because the Sioux mind did not work that way.

Item: The Red Cloud period, 1866-68, when Fetterman's Defeat, Wagon Box Fight, etc., came about was due to the Bozeman Trail, not to Sand Creek.

Item: The Little Big Horn was due to gold in the Black Hills and the Northern Pacific survey; both of which violated the treaty lands guaranteed the Sioux. And, if Gall, Crow King, Crazy Horse, and Sitting Bull, the architects of and field commanders in, the Little Big Horn fight were

(Continued on page 108)

Reducing Specialist Says:

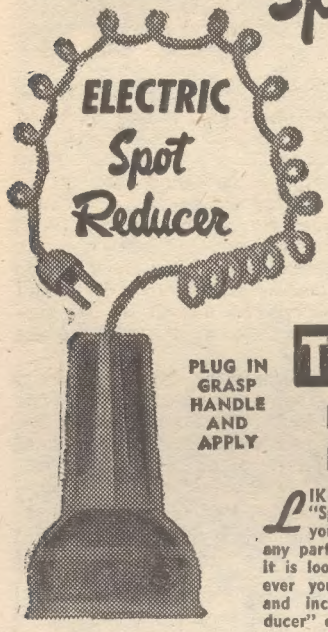
LOSE WEIGHT Where It Shows Most REDUCE MOST ANY PART OF THE BODY WITH

UNDERWRITERS LABORATORY APPROVED

Spot Reducer

Relaxing • Soothing Penetrating Massage

FOR GREATEST BENEFIT IN REDUCING by massage use Spot REDUCER with or without electricity—Also used as an aid in the relief of pains for which massage is indicated.



PLUG IN GRASP HANDLE AND APPLY

TAKE OFF EXCESS WEIGHT!

Don't Stay FAT—You Can Lose POUNDS and INCHES SAFELY Without Risking HEALTH

Take pounds off—keep slim and trim with Spot Reducer! Remarkable new invention which uses one of the most effective reducing methods employed by masseurs and turkish baths—MASSAGE!

LIKE a magic wand, the "Spot Reducer" obeys your every wish. Most any part of your body where it is loose and flabby, wherever you have extra weight and inches, the "Spot Reducer" can aid you in acquiring a youthful, slender and graceful figure. The beauty of this scientifically designed Reducer is that the method is so simple and easy, the results quick, sure and harmless. No exercise or strict diets. No steambaths, drugs or laxatives.

With the SPOT REDUCER you can now enjoy the benefits of RELAXING, SOOTHING massage in the privacy of your own home! Simple to use—just plug in, grasp handle and apply over most any part of the body—stomach, hips, chest, neck, thighs, arms, buttocks, etc. The relaxing, soothing massage breaks down FATTY TISSUES, tones the muscles and flesh, and the increased awakened blood circulation carries away waste fat—helps you regain and keep a firmer and more GRACEFUL FIGURE!

Your Own Private Masseur at Home

When you use the Spot Reducer, it's almost like having your own private masseur at home. It's fun reducing this way! It not only helps you reduce and keep slim—but also aids in the relief of those types of aches and pains—and tired nerves that can be helped by massage! The Spot Reducer is handsomely made of light weight aluminum and rubber and truly a beautiful invention you will be thankful you own. AC 110 volts. Underwriters laboratory approved.

MAIL THIS 10 DAY FREE TRIAL COUPON NOW!

TRY THE SPOT REDUCER 10 DAYS FREE IN YOUR OWN HOME!

Mail this coupon with only $1 for your Spot Reducer on approval. Pay postman $8.95 plus delivery—or send $9.95 (full price) and we ship postage prepaid. Use it for ten days in your own home. Then if not delighted return Spot Reducer for full purchase price refund. Don't delay! You have nothing to lose—except ugly, embarrassing, undesirable pounds of FAT. MAIL COUPON now!

ALSO USE IT FOR ACHES AND PAINS

CAN'T SLEEP

Relax with electric Spot Reducer. See how soothing its gentle massage can be. Helps you sleep when massage can be of benefit.

MUSCULAR ACHES:

A handy helper for transient relief of discomforts that can be aided by gentle, relaxing massage.

LOSE WEIGHT OR NO CHARGE

USED BY EXPERTS

Thousands have lost weight this way—in hips, abdomen, legs, arms, necks, buttocks, etc. The same method used by stage, screen and radio personalities and leading reducing salons. The Spot Reducer can be used in your spare time, in the privacy of your own room.

ORDER IT TODAY!

SENT ON APPROVAL—MAIL COUPON NOW!

SPOT REDUCER CO., Dept. E-794

1025 Broad St., Newark, New Jersey

Please send me the Spot Reducer for 10 days trial period. I enclose $1. Upon arrival I will pay postman only $8.95 plus postage and handling. If not delighted I may return SPOT REDUCER within 10 days for prompt refund of full purchase price.

Name .....

Address .....

City ..... *State*.....

☐ SAVE POSTAGE — check here if you enclose $9.95 with coupon. We pay all postage and handling charges. Same money back guarantee applies.

LOSE WEIGHT OR NO CHARGE

By
POUL
ANDERSON

SON OF THE Sword

"Men of Egypt, O Pharaoh's warriors, look up here and see what I have. . . ."

THEY had buried Pharaoh, and now she stood alone in the bed-chamber which had been theirs, looking out into the night and wondering how many sunrises remained to her.

He has not come. The thought ran its endless course through her head, something of the weary creak of a waterwheel in its monotony. *He has not come. I sent twice, and I have had no word, and now Tutankhamen is in his grave and they don't need me any longer.*

A breeze wandered in from the gardens and she drew it far into her lungs, fighting

A tale of blood on the Nile—and of man's two deathless greeds. . . .

for steadiness. *I am afraid to die,* she thought drearily.

There was a light step behind her and she whirled around. The wall was hard against her shoulders, she pressed herself to it and heard the drumming of her heart and the broken gasp of her breath. Eie stood within the doorway.

The guttering lamp cast his shadow huge behind him, and other shadows went sliding over walls and ceiling and out of the farther corners. He stood tall and thin in his white robes, and the darkness was like a veil over his gaunt, hooked face. His eyes caught the light in faint glitter.

"You should not be up, gracious lady," he said. He spoke softly, with the hint of an old man's quaver. "You are tired—it has been a hard and grievous day for you."

"What do you want?" she whispered.

"I wished only to see that you were well," he replied. "It has been a heavy day when your beloved husband was entombed. He walks in the fields of Amen now, but indeed you—miss him."

When she made no response, he went on, slowly: "And now I am to rule over Egypt. Strange how the gods work, my lady! It will be hard for me to meet the splendor of your husband."

Splendor! jeered her mind. She thought of poor sick frightened Tutankhamen, coughing bloody slime out of his lungs, and wondered dully if Eie had a sense of humor.

"I also wished to say—one other thing." Eie tugged his scant gray beard. "I understand that the burden of grief will drive one to do strange things. You were not yourself in the first days after Pharaoh's death, and no one would hold you accountable for what you may have done. Still—gracious lady, it was unwise to write to the Hittite king."

He knew!

"The Hittites are barbarians and enemies," said Eie, as dryly as a lecturing tutor. "It was the old spider Shubbiluliuma their king who had most to do with riving our empire from us in the days of—your father. It is his doing that our armies must even now be fighting in Syria for the life of Egypt. No, you should not have written." He grimaced, meshing his withered face in wrinkles. "A Hittite prince on the throne of Thebes—you would have given yourself to that! It would have been the Hyksos all over again, the outlanders whom your own glorious ancestors battled to drive from Egypt." He shook his head, and the shadow bobbed and distorted itself behind him. "I really cannot understand it, my lady. Even in the time of sorrow, one would have thought you would remember you are of the royal blood of Egypt."

The room was quiet. So quiet. Beyond the doorway was a cavern of shadow, but she caught the glint of light on the spearheads of Eie's Kushite guardsmen. She wondered in a swimming daze whether they would enter now and kill her.

"Fortunately," said the parched old voice, "the Hittite king was unsure, thinking it a trap. He waited until you wrote again, and that letter the guardians of Egypt learned about. He sent a son of his, but holy Amen still watches over Egypt."

She found her voice again, and it was strangely flat and steady. "The prince is dead. Your agents murdered him on the way."

"He died of fever, my lady. The Hittites were fully satisfied that it was fever. I had the news only yesterday."

"Let it be fever then," she said wearily. "But, Eie, you could do me one service for old times' sake. It was my father, whose name is abominated now, who raised you to power. It was he who married you to the Royal Nurse, which is all the claim you have to the throne of Egypt. You were his master of the horse, and received many signs of his favor, and worshipped with him at the shrine of his god who may not be named any more. You do owe me something."

"Anything you wish, my lady."

"Tell me—use the divining arts of Amen—tell when I can expect a fever to strike me. I would like to know when."

"GRACIOUS lady!" Eie raised skinny hands. "The very thought! Why, it is my constant prayer as of all Egypt that the gods send you life and health and strength—"

She turned her back, suddenly too tired to be much afraid. "Go away," she said.

"My lady, I am wounded that you should think ill of me—"

"Does it make any difference?" she asked tonelessly. "You are a fool, Eie. You are

a jointed doll and it is General Horemheb who pulls the strings, and he in turn is but the tool of the priests of Amen. Even as my husband was, even as I was, all good little tools busily tearing down the work of my father. Surely you don't think that any will you might have to keep me alive could change things? No, the priests tolerated Tutankhamen, since he was weak and afraid and made a glittering show. But my only use was to help keep him on the throne, strengthen his claim a little by my direct royal lineage. Now that he is dead, I too have served my purpose, and the last of Akhnaton's seed which they hate can safely be disposed of. Not that I think you even have any will for my safety. No, you are simply too cowardly to say to my face that I am going to die. So please go away."

"My lady—"

She raised her voice. "Guards, the lord Eie is weary. See him to his chambers."

He stood for a moment, wearing his shadows like a cloak, and then he turned on his heel and walked out. She heard the sandaled feet go on down the corridor.

Pepy crept from the little side room where he slept. He had a beaker of wine in his hand. "Drink this, my lady," he said. "You will sleep better."

She drained it in a few gulps. The slave crouched at her feet, watching her. He was from Kush, black as the night outside, but a hunchbacked dwarf. He wore only a loincloth and a great shining dagger, and his teeth gleamed in his flat face.

"If you wish, lady," he said, "the next time the lord Eie comes here I will spring out at him. One sweep of this blade will end his gabble."

"What good would that do?" she asked, and smiled in spite of herself. Pepy was the last thing they had left her. One by one the servants of her father's time had been peeled away from her on some pretext or other, one by one her friends at court had been replaced; but Pepy the dwarf she had kept at every cost, for he was the last being on earth who loved her.

"No use, my friend," she said. "It is too late. Our little plot has miscarried, and now it is only a matter of days. Most likely poison—you cannot taste all my food for me, nor would they scruple to have you die. I was thinking, though, that I might still be able to send you back to Kush."

He laughed. "No, no, my lady, you will not be rid of old Pepy so easily. Was there another, even at home, who had a kind word for the misshapen little blackskin? Did you not buy me to save me from the usual punishment for stealing from my master?" He wagged his big malformed head solemnly. "Oh, I have stolen from you too, my lady, be sure I have. The royal stores would never miss a few pieces of cake or a little beer or some coppers. I owe you too much, for beer and kindness, to leave you now."

She sighed. "Thank you, Pepy. It is cruel of me to let you stay, but—it is lonely here, you know. They are all waiting and watching and whispering, and none dare be friends with one whom Amen has plainly marked for death."

The wine was strong, and she was beginning to feel it, buzzing in her tired brain. "Oh, I tried to hang onto life, for this is a fair world and I cannot look for much favor from any of the gods in the next one. If indeed there is another, which I begin to doubt. But there is not much left to live for now, when all Egypt is become a jail. It will be good to rest."

Pepy leaned forward until his lips were close to her drooping head. "Lady," he whispered with sudden urgency, "would you then like to leave this jail?"

She started to wakefulness and stared at him.

Pepy laughed again, a high chuckle in the still, flickering dark. "Hee-hee! Nobody notices Pepy the dwarf. He is but a little black cockroach scuttling from corner to corner, sitting in the wineshops and drinking himself silly. But he has very big ears. People have often remarked on his elephant's ears."

"Pepy—"

"Listen, my lady. There is a certain man in Thebes at this moment—"

THOAS raised his hand to the wineshop keeper. "Another!"

The man scurried over with a bumper of white-headed Egyptian beer. Thoas turned to the girl who nestled against him. "Come, little sister," he said merrily, "drink with me."

"No, no, I have had enough," she laughed. "The room spins like a chariot wheel."

"Drink, I said!" He held the rim to her lips, and she must perforce let the beer in or see it run over her dress.

"That's a good girl." He kissed her, taking his time about it, and took a long swig out of the goblet. "Ahhh! Nefer, long after the pyramids are crumbled to dust and the name of Egypt is forgotten for all else, men will remember and bless her for beer."

Someone plucked at his tunic. He turned his head, scowling, and looked on the face of the hideous black dwarf who often haunted the tavern. "And what do you want?" he snapped.

"Gracious master," whined the little man, "I bring a message for you."

"Bring it in the morning. Now go away."

"It will not wait, my lord. It concerns your ship."

"Eh?" Thoas gripped the twisted shoulder with a force that brought the breath sucking sharply between teeth. "Eh, what is it, speak!"

"In the corner, sir. It is private."

He followed the Kushite and they squatted together, face to face in the raucous dimness. The dwarf's eyeballs gleamed white.

"Now—what's the matter—quickly!"

"I am a slave in the royal house. They call me Pepy."

"Well, what of it? Hurry, or I'll knock it from your teeth."

"My lord, I hear many things. No one notices a slave. And I heard the chief of the city guards talking with his lieutenants today. They said word had reached them that Thoas of Cyprus had something to do with the disappearance of a certain Egyptian ship on the high seas. They meant to take action."

"How do I know you speak truth?" snapped Thoas harshly.

Pepy shrugged. "You must take my word for it, that is all. You must also do a service for my owner in exchange for this information. It will be quite necessary for you to do so, because you will need my owner's help to escape. There are ships downstream to block off your retreat, and this person is the only one whose influence will get you safely by them. They will stop and search all vessels save one which is carrying her."

"Her! Who is she?"

"Not so fast, my lord Thoas. This is the bargain. You will convey this person out of Egypt and see that she arrives safely and honorably at Cyprus. For this you will have the protection of which I spoke. You will also be paid a good sum of treasure, gold and silver and precious stones from the royal house itself."

Thoas scratched his dark head, wondering how far he could trust—anyone. "You are a liar," he said.

"As you will, my lord. When the guards take you in the city, or the ships do on the Nile, you will see. In any case, it is pure truth that you will be well paid for doing this somewhat dangerous service. Can you afford the risk of not believing me? Or can you afford to lose the reward that is offered?"

"Hm." Thoas felt his tensed muscles loosen a trifle as he reached one of the quick decisions which his life had required. It might be a trap of some sort, but that was unlikely. The Egyptians could take him without subterfuge if they wanted to—there was no conceivable reason for their putting him on guard by any tale, false or otherwise.

Someone wanted the use of his ship very badly. And that meant that—she—would be ready to pay well.

"Who is this?" he asked slowly.

"It is the lady Ankhsenamen, daughter of Pharaoh Akhnaton—on whom be peace—and widow of the Tutankhamen they buried only yesterday."

"Hm—hm!" This began to look interesting, and more than a little dangerous. If the young queen wished to flee the land with the first and best pirate she could find, then she was in trouble. And that meant that she could bring all the hounds of Egypt down on his trail—and Thebes lay a long distance from the open sea. On the other hand, there was always some chance that the dwarf spoke truth about his being wanted for robbery.

"How much will you pay?" he asked.

Pepy named a good sum. Thoas laughed with calculated scorn. "Do you expect me to risk worse than death for that? I'd sooner take my chances on fighting through alone. Make it ten times as great, and I might consider it."

"We can perhaps double the amount, my lord, but that is all we can do. Egypt is not as rich a land as it once was."

"Nine times, and not a copper less. Man,

this is perilous work. For your kind of pay, I'd rather swim home."

They haggled for some time, and Pepy reflected that the bold sea rover had an excellent business head. He finally settled for a price that he swore, with many sighs and groans and prayers to the lesser gods, was sheerest bloodsucking—and indeed it would be hard to gather so much wealth in a short time without discovery.

"Now," he said at last, "this is what must be done—"

THEBES drowsed in the heat of early afternoon and the streets were almost empty. Here and there a laborer, a beggar, a poor traveler from the desert might lie curled in an alley or doorway; a squad of Mazaiu marched by, the black guardsmen, sunlight hot on their spearheads; someone or other of the multitude of nations gathered in the city slipped past on an errand of his own. But the rest of the town lay quiet under a windless brassy sky, and echoes threw the hollow sound of feet back from blank-walled houses.

It was a nasty business. Thoas felt a little cold in the dancing, flaring day. Thebes was so still, it had withdrawn to its homes and lay watching in shadow. He had been in situations before where swords were blinking and arrows darkening the air, but this walking openly into the house of the enemy was unnerving.

A couple of priests scurried by on slithering sandaled feet, their shaven pates aglisten in the fierce white light. They looked harmless enough, thought the Cretan, but still they were of the lordship in Egypt and it was far to open sea. It was their breed who had outlived Akhnaton and his brave, silly love of all men, they who had thrown the dead Pharaoh's bright god into the dust, they who had made puppets of two successor kings in the last nine or ten years and were now to crown a third. And it was he who—well, too late to go back now.

His party was small, four sailors of his crew stalking under burdens of great chests which were empty, the veiled figure of the girl Nefer—a hard time he'd had persuading her to this adventure, gold and blows were needed—and then himself. Five men and a frightened girl from the Theban gutters, walking up to the house of Pharaoh! Briefly, his mouth twisted into a wry grin. They'd make a ballad of this in Cyprus, if he ever got back.

There were four guardsmen standing before the side gate in the wall around the palace. One slanted his spear across their path as they approached. "What do you want?" he snapped.

"I am a merchant come at the bidding of the lady Ankhsenamen," answered Thoas. Suddenly he was cool, doubts lost in the urgency of the moment, his mind steady over a deep tautness. "I bring some wares for her highness to inspect."

The guards looked suspiciously up and down his outlander's figure. He wore the short Cretan tunic, with a Phrygian cap on his head and a sea-stained blue cloak over his shoulders. Beneath the headgear was a cap of bronze, and a short sword, hidden by the cloak, was slung under his left arm. He smiled with an insolent easiness.

"I have heard of none such—" began the captain unsurely.

"She sent her dwarf—Pepy, did they call him—after me. Where is that little ape? He'll tell you."

As if he had called on one of the lesser devils, Pepy appeared inside the gate. "Aye, aye, this is the man," he said. "Let them in, Ahmes."

"They're no merchant crew by the looks of them," said the captain. "They've seen plenty of fights, and I'll wager they started most of them too."

"Of course we've had to fight!" growled Thoas indignantly. "It's getting so honest seamen can't venture a league from shore without being set on by some of these cursed pirates. When is your precious Pharaoh going to do something to protect decent folk, eh? Now, let me in, I haven't all day to stand and argue."

Ahmes shook a stubborn head. "The lord Eie said to be particularly careful of robbers. These are uncertain times."

"Five men and a woman to rob the queen of all Egypt!" gibed Pepy. "Well, if all the soldiers are of your caliber, Ahmes, I dare say it might be done."

"What does the woman have to do with all this?"

Pepy leered. "She is to show the use of certain foreign—cosmetics, shall we say?"

Ahmes chuckled. "I don't think the lady Akhsenamen need concern herself much

over those any more. However, let them pass, let them pass."

So that was how the wind blew, reflected Thoas as they came in. Well, he might have known it. The hatred of Amen's priesthood for Akhnaton had not died with the man, and now that they had no more use for his daughter, Tutankhamen's wife, they'd be only too pleased to get rid of her.

To be sure, Pharaoah's blood was sacred in Egypt, and to the common people the thought that even a female child of the dynasty should be murdered was the worst of blasphemy. But the knowledge that Ankhsenamen was to be quietly put out of the way was seemingly general in the more sophisticated court, and nobody seemed to care. Truly the old days were gone.

He murmured fiercely to the dwarf: "You lied to me about the guards being on my trail. There was no need for me to do this!"

Pepy shrugged and grinned. "Well, maybe so. But it will be the truth as soon as we're away from the big house, so I didn't really lie. I only anticipated the fact a bit. Hee-hee!"

"Curse you, I can leave now—"

"Try it and see what happens. I'll scream bloody murder, I will. My lady will deny all knowledge of you. They don't treat robbers well in Egypt. No, no, my lord Thoas, best you remain true to us and earn the reward we promised."

The Cretan snarled, reaching for his sword in a brief rage. It flickered out again, was lost in the thrumming tension of his body, and he managed a sour smile. The little man had trapped him very neatly, and now there was nothing to do but go on with the scheme. But if once they got free, and he had Pepy on the seas, that might be another story.

They went through great cool gardens to the house itself. Long and low, it stretched behind its columned portico in a dazzling whiteness with flashes of copper and raw gold. But it was built of mud, he knew, and a generation or two of weather could crumble it back into earth. He thought of the timber hall that was his, that his father had built in the wild hills of Cyprus, and of the windy trees and the long slope of mountain down to the sea, salt air and anchored ships and gulls flying overhead. Suddenly Egypt was stifling.

Into the palace, past motionless Nubian guardsmen, down long dim halls where only soft-footed slaves moved in the midday drowse, and to a doorway screened by an arras of rich weave. Pepy went through without ceremony and beckoned the others after him.

"My lady," he said, bowing grotesquely, "this is Thoas the Cretan, whose merchandise you desired to see."

THE newcomer halted, staring in slack-jawed amazement, until the dwarf's snicker brought him back to himself. Was this Ankhsenamen, the widow of Pharaoh and the pawn of empire? Why, she was a girl—she was scarce eighteen years of age and lovely to behold. He looked at her slender supple form, the graceful head and the warm golden skin, and remembered that she was the daughter of Nefertiti whose beauty was still unforgotten in Egypt. Suddenly he thought that his mission might have other rewards than those he had bargained for.

As for her, she saw a medium-tall man, strongly built, with close-cropped dark hair framing a scarred brown face—good lines in that face, though it had something of hardness that she was not used to and the light eyes were cold. His men, behind him, were of his stamp, but uncouth and ill-favored, and she wondered with a brief chill if this was the best way after all.

"No time to spare, my lady," said Pepy. "If the gracious lord Eie, may his bones rot in a dunghill, comes doddering in here, we may have some explaining to do. The luck that Horemheb, who can handle things as they should be handled, is in Memphis, will not see us through other perils."

"Yes—" Thoas pulled his gaze from the long black Egyptian eyes of Ankhsenamen. He remembered that there was money involved. "What about the payment?"

"Here." Pepy opened a great chest in the corner, and the filtered sunlight was shattered on gold and silver and precious stones, fire frozen and glittering in the twilight of the room. "Here, fill your precious caskets and be quick about it."

The sailors stooped greedily over and the jewels rattled into their boxes. Thoas turned to the tavern girl Nefer and stripped the veil and the long cloak from her. He handed

them to Ankhsenamen with the curt words, "Put these on. We'll pass you off as this wench when we go out."

Nefer was shivering, and there were tears in her eyes. "What of me?" she whispered. "You promised, Thoas, you promised—"

"Be still!" He slapped her, a hard flat smack in the silence of the room, and his gray eyes were scornful. "I told you what to do. Wait here for a while till we're safely gone. Then simply leave. If anyone asks you, say you were visiting a man, one of the palace servants. They'll believe it of the likes of you. But if we're caught, through your blundering or any other reason, they'll flay you alive in the market square and sell your flesh to the cannibals. Now be still!"

She went over into a corner, trying to stop her trembling.

Thoas turned to find Ankhsenamen's grave regard on him. "That was not a good way to treat her," she said.

"Get that outfit on, or by the belly of Isis I'll leave you here too," he snapped. "Before all the gods—women!" He strode over and helped fill the chests of treasure.

Silently, the queen donned the other woman's outer garments and sat down on the bed to wait. Pepy crept over beside her.

Thoas straightened. "Done," he said. "Now we can go."

"Not quite so fast," said Pepy. "Remember, you are a merchant exhibiting your wares. You will haggle over prices, praise the workmanship and purity, call on all your ancestors to witness that your shoddy imitations are better than the goods of Osiris in Amenti. Sit down, my lord, sit down and entertain us with lies about your warlike exploits."

"That dwarf needs his head taken off," growled one of the sailors.

"To look like you, my beauty? Hee-hee!" Pepy squatted at Ankhsenamen's feet and rocked back and forth on his heels. "No, my lord, I do think it better to take your ease for a while. That guardsman Ahmes has a low and very suspicious nature."

Thoas paced restlessly. "You may be right. But watch your tongue, ape. You're not the favored pet of a queen any longer." His eyes swung to Ankhsenamen. "Nor are you the first lady of a petticoat kingdom. As long as you're with me, you're one of the crew and will jump to my word. Otherwise I'll abandon you wherever you are."

She stiffened, and her reply was cold: "The right to discourtesy was not part of your payment, Captain Thoas."

"Curse it, woman, I *am* the captain, and this fool's errand is desperate enough without a female tongue cluttering things up." His teeth flashed in his sun-darkened face, but it was not a merry smile. "Have no fear. If I can, I'll bring you safe to Cyprus, and unmolested save for what slaps may be needed. Though what you'll do there is beyond me."

"I must rely on you to take me to some noble of good manners," she said, and could not hold her voice quite steady.

"That's not the easiest thing to find on Cyprus, but I'll try. I suppose you mean someone who'll put you in his harem without beating you too often."

"I mean a man of honor."

He shrugged. "Very well. An old man."

She would have asked further, but his manner was too hostile. *But what could I expect?* she thought wearily. It was her doing that he stood under a sword.

"I—I am sorry if you—regret this—" she began.

He grinned again, with a little more warmth. "You are nothing of the sort, Akhsenamen. You are only too happy for a chance to get out of this hellhole alive. No matter, I'd have done the same in your place."

"You're in my lady's place now, lord Thoas," leered Pepy.

CHAPTER 2

THOAS FELL silent, pacing and scowling and starting at every sound from behind the arras. Time dragged leaden before the dwarf rose and said, "I think we can go now."

Ankhsenamen followed closed by Thoas, down the long hall and out to the blinding sunlight. They went through the garden, and she breathed deeply of its heavy fragrance. *I will never see you again, I will never walk in your twilight again. The Nile will flow and the land lie green, and I will be dust blowing in an alien country, O my Egypt. Farewell, farewell, farewell.*

The outer wall loomed above them. Folk were stirring now as the sun began to decline, nobles and servants moving along the

paths, and she looked away with a haze before her vision. They were all staring at her, every eye in the world drilled at her back and she didn't dare turn around. Any moment the shout would go up, any moment the guardsmen would come running, and still she paced slowly in the company of the sailors. She remembered nightmares, when she had fled and fled through gray shadows —her feet had been weighted so she could scarce move and the drumming hoofs of pursuit had come nearer and nearer until their thunder filled the world and she had woken up crying in the night. Then her mother would come to hold her close, and perhaps her grave-eyed father would be there to murmur in her ear—but they were dead, they were dead, and she couldn't wake up now.

Her eyes fell on Pepy's gleaming black head where he trotted beside her. Poor little dwarf, brave little monster, he was all that remained, he was the last link with a real world in this slowfooted dream. She thought with a sudden shock that Pepy was closer to her heart than Tutankhamen had ever been.

They came up to the gate. "Let us through again," said Pepy.

"What would you go with them for?" yawned Ahmes.

"None of your affair," snapped the dwarf. "Through!"

"Why," grinned the sentry, "you may have stolen somewhat from her highness. I wouldn't trust any outlander with my shadow. Open those chests, men. They seem to weigh more heavily on your shoulders than when you entered."

"Well," said Pepy slowly, "her highness is getting a bit careless these days. She has other things to think about, they say. Thoas, have you any token for these soldiers?"

The Cretan grunted and dug unwillingly into his purse. Ahmes and the three other guards took his coins with a snigger. "And a look at your woman," said the captain. "A veil and a heavy cloak are a strange sight in Egypt, whose women might as well wear spun glass. I would see what you are hiding so well from other eyes."

"No." Thoas' voice turned flat and cold. "Let us through or there'll be trouble." He flicked open his cloak to show the sword. "We're all armed. Do we go through or shall there be a fight over it?"

Sullenly, Ahmes opened the gate and they passed out. As Ankhsenamen went by, the guards captain reached out a sudden hand and pulled her veil off.

He stood for a moment staring into her face, and his mouth dropped loose. With a rasp of metal, Thoas had his sword out. A gleam in the sunlight, and Ahmes stumbled and fell.

Thoas whirled, yanking his blade free, and stabbed it into the face of the nearest sentry. The hideous crunching of bone was lost in a scream.

One of the burly Cretans raised his loaded chest and sent it crashing into the head of another guard. Skull and box burst asunder, and the jewels rolled in blood. Pepy sprang ape-like, his great dagger aflash, to get the last man from the side as he stabbed after one of the sailors.

"Come on!" Thoas clashed his dripping sword home and grabbed the fainting woman by the wrist. "Drop that other box—two men to a chest—run!"

They fled across the broad avenue, six men and a girl and half the queen's wealth. Such folk as were abroad scattered wildly, yelling. A horn blew in the gardens behind.

"This way!" gasped Pepy.

Down another street, into a narrow stinking alley, through it to a courtyard and out to a labyrinth winding between huddled mud shacks. They thrust into a mass of people, the ragged poor of Thebes, boiling before and behind them. The roar of voices whirled in blind panic. Brutally, they forced a way through the crowd.

A long time later Thoas halted.

Ankhsenamen swayed against his side, and he saw how her face had whitened and how her breast rose and fell with strangled weeping.

Roughly, he grabbed one slim shoulder and shook her. "Walk! Walk, by Minos, and act your part!"

Pepy's voice was thin. "That is no way to treat my lady. She is not used to bloodshed."

"She'd better get used to it, or some of it will be her own. Come on!"

They forced a slow way through the eddying crowds. Thebes had wakened from its slumber and all the city was out on its various business. Merchants cried their sleazy wares from bazaars like caves in the clay-brick walls; porters hurried by, gasp-

ing under their loads; beggars and harlots plied their shrill trades; the narrow, twisting streets brawled with life, they were like rivers shouting between grimy walls, and it was heavy work to push through and death came striding behind.

Ankhsenamen pressed close to Thoas, shoved by the mob, shouted at by drunken men. Any instant, she thought sickly, someone would know her, the cry would arise and the soldiers come thundering down on them.

As if he had read her mind, Thoas suddenly lowered his lips to her ear and murmured: "Little fear of being known. The royal folk have always been so far above these people that they can't imagine you without a golden canopy and a regiment of slaves."

She tried to speak, but her throat was too dry and she managed only to nod. He noticed how her hair shone blue-black in the sun. By all the gods, he thought, a tasty wench! And now that he had only half his payment, he could argue that only half his bargain held. But first they had to get out of this rat's-nest city.

EGYPT was a strange land, his mind ran on. He had never understood it. It was the queen of the world and its coffer of gold, it was riotous with life, folk laughed more often here than in any other place he knew—Egyptian women were sweet and eager, Egyptian beer was the blood of life. But ever there brooded over it the shadow of death—the pyramids and the Sphinx at Gizeh, the tombs in the Valley of Kings across the river, vile darkness of the mummy-makers' dens, stupefying pillars and colossi built to beast-headed gods, the talon clutch of a priesthood which sucked its living off the fear of oblivion. Akhnaton had let brief light shine over Egypt, and for his pains his monuments were broken and his name cursed and his child hunted through the streets of Thebes.

O father Nile, you flow broad and cool in a glory of green, and there is laughter among your lotuses and Ra the lifegiver swings on shining wings up into the eye of the sun. But crocodiles swim between your weeds eating the corpses of the murdered.

Thoas remembered again the great

THE AMERICAN DISTILLING CO., INC., NEW YORK, PEKIN, ILL., SAN FRANCISCO • 86 PROOF, 65% GRAIN NEUTRAL SPIRITS

draughty hall on the heights of Cyprus and the far blue sea and sunlight streaming down windy slopes to shatter in a million pieces on its waves. Aye, it would be good to come home, if ever they did.

The breathing of his burdened men was heavy behind him. That was something else to reckon with. He could not sail as in the old days when Crete's navy had plowed the eastern sea—these were barbarians of Syria and Cyprus and the sweepings of a dozen civilized ports, and if they agreed that it was wrong for him to risk their necks thusly they'd feed him to the fish. And Ankhsenamen—suddenly he hated to think of what would happen to Ankhsenamen.

The same thing as I intended, he reflected wryly. *Only they are robbers and swine, and I am a very fine fellow.*

Coldly, he began to wonder how many of his crew might stand by him if it came to that.

But first—get out of Thebes!

They strode swiftly along the docks, their feet slapping on stone, until they were at the moorings of the Cretan's own ship.

She was a lean black galley carrying some two score hard-souled crewmen. There was a tiny cabin under the narrow poop, and prow and stem curled up in lotus-like figures plated with tarnished silver. Thoas had had a busy morning gathering his men from taverns and bawdyhouses, kicking them into life and sending them to the ship, and a few were still missing. They watched him with sullen eyes—a mixed and ragged band, Cretan and Cyprian and Nubian and Phoenician and indescribable — robbers, paupers, runaway slaves, and all with edged metal at their waists. They were good men in a fight that was plainly to their advantage, but sometimes skippering them was like living with a cageful of leopards.

Thoas jumped lightly from wharf to poop and looked down the ship's half-open hull. "Off we go!" he cried.

A burly Cyprian pushed aft. "And have you sold all our cargo so soon?"

"Indeed," lied Thoas, though it still lay in the warehouses. Even the half of Ankhsenamen's reward was more than he had expected to get from the sale of a plundered Phoenician galley's load. "And a good price, too. You'll all get your share, but now we must be off."

"With no holiday in Thebes?"

"Where is Chorson—are we leaving without Dogtooth—you've forbidden women aboard and here you bring that wench in broad daylight—" The surly mutter ran around the pressing bearded faces.

Thoas stared coldly at them and drew his bloody sword. "There was trouble," he said, hoping too many dock loungers would not overhear. "We got a good price for our wares, and then I saw a chance to get a little additional and took it. But that led to a fight, and now we must clear from Thebes at once."

"And the woman?" demanded the Cyprian. "The woman?"

"She and her attendant, the dwarf, come with us to our home. She bought passage, and is not to be molested by anyone."

"And now we carry paying passengers?" jeered a voice.

Thoas looked around, and the big Nubian Akhmet who was his friend came up to stand beside him with a wicked-bladed ax in one hand.

The captain said quietly, "We sail now."

The crewmen looked at one another, and grumbled in their beards, and remembered other occasions when Thoas used that tone of voice. They turned to their labor.

A light breeze was springing up over the Nile—from the south, praise Minos—and Thoas ordered the sail set. It bellied listlessly, urging the ship slowly out into the great muddy stream, and men went to their places on the rowers' benches and the creak and splash of oars lifted into the air.

The Cretan stood looking over the rail. He took off his bronze cap and let the wind ruffle his sweat-dampened hair and breathed again of its wetness. On either side of the river lay Thebes, sprawling, massive, the hovels of the poor huddled under the arrogant homes of nobles and gods, the hugeness of Amen's sanctuary incredible on the west bank. A haze of smoke and dust veiled the city, and its unending roar was a muted pulsing in his ears. On the west he could see the brutal reaches of the Libyan Mountains, guarding the Valley of Kings where the great of Egypt lay—where he who had been husband to the girl at his side was a pickled corpse sealed into stone and darkness. On the east was the smaller Arabian range, its heights touched with the long sunset rays and its lower slopes blue with a dusk that crept upward.

They were away. By all the gods, they were away!

HE LOOKED at Ankhsenamen. She was desperately weary, trembling a little and with dark circles under her great eyes, but she stood straight and quiet beside him, looking westward to the sun. The breeze ruffled her heavy black hair and the thin white robe she wore.

She was whispering something, and he bent closer to hear. *"Praise unto thee, light of the world, creator of all things, thou who lookest with love on all nations of man and all which is in them, O Aton—"*

He could not keep from exclaiming: "But that was your father's god!"

She looked up at him, and tears blurred her eyes. "Yes, he was the Aton, the one god who is the maker of all the world and loves it all alike, the one who spoke to my father. We worshipped him with songs and laid flowers on his altar, under the sky in the holy city Akhetaton."

"He is forbidden in Egypt now. You have worshipped Amen for—ten years? Can you even remember the god who lived while you were still a little girl?"

"I can remember him, and sometimes I have whispered prayers to him even in Thebes. I worshipped Amen too, and was afraid. But they kill beasts in the darkness of the temples, and there is only a wooden figure worked by the priests." She lifted her shining head. "I will have done with Amen now, and go back to the Aton who was with me long ago."

Thoas shrugged. For himself, he did not care much about the gods one way or another. He paid whatever dues were customary to the deities of whatever land he happened to be in, and sacrificed to Minos for luck on his voyages, but it was more to appease the fears of his men than out of any very strong beliefs of his own.

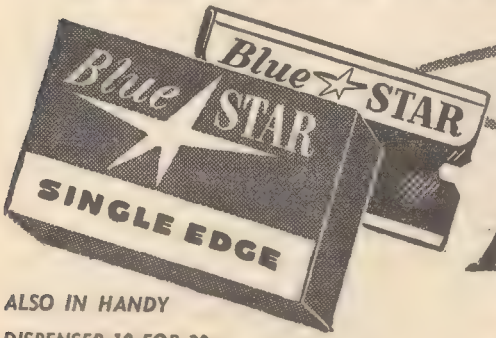
"You may have the cabin," he said. "It's cluttered up with storage, but you can find yourself some clothes and bedding in one of the chests and make room for slumber. Pepy can sleep outside your door, if you wish, and I will be within call if you should need me."

"And do you think that we can really

A Dollar's Worth of Shaving Pleasure *for a Dime!*

Smoother, easier, faster shaves every time because Blue Star Blades are ground and honed in oil

Try a Blue Star Blade on hard-to-shave spots. See how much shaving pleasure it gives you for so little money. Shave and save with Blue Star today.



ONLY 10¢ A PACKAGE

ALSO IN HANDY DISPENSER 10 FOR 30c

PRECISION ASR PRODUCTS

Blue STAR

SINGLE EDGE RAZOR BLADES

AMERICAN SAFETY RAZOR CORP., BROOKLYN 1, N. Y.

escape to Cyprus?" she breathed softly.

"Who knows? It depends on how soon Eie finds you are gone, and how soon he decides you have fled down the river with the Cretan ship that left in such suspicious haste today—and after that, it depends on how fast his men can go, and whether we get a wind or not. He can drive slaves in relays and outrow us two to one, but with a good breeze, or out in open sea, I'll show my heels to any Egyptian craft afloat. We must try, that is all."

'You are a bitter man," she said after a silence. "But you have not the look of a plain raider. What are you striving for, Thoas?"

"To get back to Cyprus with my head on my shoulders," he snapped, and turned away to oversee the rowers.

TOWARD morning the breeze stiffened to a murmuring wind that filled the sail, and Thoas let his weary oarsmen sleep. They'd need their strength later, he thought—perhaps not so very much later if Pharaoh's troops were close behind.

He himself had caught only short naps as they labored through the night, and now he found himself fully awake. He went aft and relieved the steerman, who curled up on the planks with a sigh and was soon lost to the world, and then, save for a lookout in the bows, he seemed to be the only waking soul aboard.

False dawn had glimmered palely and now darkness returned. The moon had set, and only a vaulted sky of grandly wheeling stars lit his way. Here and there a fire glimmered on the unseen banks, but they slid past in silence and it was lost to view. Looking forward along the shadowy length of the hull, he could make out the dim square of sail, and the river gleamed faintly for a fathom or two beyond the sides. He stood alone in the night of stars and stillness.

Stillness—it was very quiet now that the moon was down. Only the low sad murmur of wind and the lapping of wavelets against the ship broke the hush. The wind was cool and wet, folding itself around him like a moving cloak, he shivered a little beneath his skin. Once in a while the lonely long-drawn howl of a dog or jackal would quaver out and hang for a time in the night and then be lost again; or a crocodile would slap its tail or a hippopotamus break surface with a smack and splash which carried far in the voiceless night.

Someone stirred in the mass of sleeping men, murmured and whimpered in his dreams. It was strange how helpless even the strongest was in that shadow land. Thoas sighed, and the wind took up the little sound into its own blowing.

Someone else moved, came out of the cabin beneath him and stood for a space looking out over the Nile. Couldn't she sleep either?

"Come up here," he said, very softly, and the wind bore it to her with the ripple of water and the creak of planks and ropes. "Come up here and talk to me for a while."

She climbed the short ladder, her white dress vague in the gloom, and came over to where he stood at the steering oar. When she was close, he could discern her face and form, the lineaments muted by shadow.

"Where is your little friend?" he asked, and knew it was the wrong thing to say.

"He sleeps. Poor Pepy, he has been so anxious and worked so hard." She leaned on the rail, not looking at him, staring across the river to the shore that was a blur of darkness. Presently she laughed, a sad little laugh caught up and scattered by the moving airs. "Strange, is it not, that the only friend of the queen of Egypt should be a hunchbacked slave?"

He could not keep back the harsh retort: "And now you feel so sorry for the poor queen."

"No—not much." She drew a little away from him but did not go haughtily off, and he remembered that she was, after all, very young. "But it is lonely, when you have been used to—everything else."

"A change," he admitted, with a smile twisting half his mouth. "You may not like it, you know. Anything could happen to you."

"But I would still be alive, Captain Thoas."

"Are you that afraid to die?"

"No—yes—oh, I don't know. My parents thought little about what comes after death, they said the loving Aton would see to us. And then—they died, and the priests of Amen came back." Her voice rose a little, with a small trembling in it. "They would not even let my father lie dead in

peace. They took his tired bones from the grave he had chosen and laid him in disgrace with his mother. They let no one speak his name save as 'that criminal of an Akhnaton.' Nothing shall remain to his memory, so that in time he will die even in the next world, he who had nothing but love for all that was in this one. They hinted that if we were not pleasing to the old gods, Tutankhamen and I, we would not be entombed, our souls would wander homeless. . . . Oh, I didn't know what to believe. Was Amen or Aton the false god, or were all gods a lie and this life a brief meaningless accident, or—" She turned her face up to him, and the starlight glittered off tears. "Thoas, what do you believe? What do they say is true in Cyprus?"

He shrugged. "Some say one thing, some say another. As for me, I find enough to do in this world without worrying about any other."

"But when you die, what then?"

"Some have told me one tale, some another, but I have heard nothing from the lips of any who have themselves died. So I will wait and see. I do say this, though, that you Egyptians think too much about the next life. You should cling to this one and enjoy it as best you can and forget about the rest."

"I—suppose so. It was a good life. I tried to keep it." She smiled uncertainly. "I tried so hard that, had I but succeeded, all the course of the world would have been altered."

"Hm?"

She told him how she had written to the Hittite king, as soon as her husband was dead, and offered marriage to any of his sons. "I had seventy days or so while they made Tutankhamen's mummy ready. Thereafter they would have no use for me. But marriage to a daughter of Pharaoh gives some claim to the throne of Egypt. Had old Shubbiluliuma acted at once—" A fierce note: "What might Egypt and Hatti united not have done! What might they not have done!"

He whistled softly. Was this the frightened girl who had nearly fainted during the brawl at the gate? Had this child attempted such a stroke as men would have remembered for ten thousand years?

Pharaoh's daughter—descendant of men who had kicked the Hyksos barbarians out of the realm and conquered Syria and made the nations of Asia tremble—by all the gods, it meant something!

Slowly, he said, "I am sorry, my lady. I misjudged you."

Her laugh was small and uncertain. "Oh, let us forget all that. I am no longer the queen of Egypt, you know. I am no longer anything."

"Aye. Aye, we've all come down in the world."

"You too?" There was a sudden understanding between them.

"In a way. My father was of a noble family in Crete. He fled when the northerners burned Knossos and came to Cyprus, where he mastered a very petty estate. Underchief of a vassal in a backward part of a barbarian land—well, I have never known anything else, except from tales and from seeing the blackened ruins of Cretan cities, so I can hardly make too much complaint."

"But why have you turned—"

"Pirate? Oh, it is a profitable sideline to trading voyages and farming in the thin soil of home. One can't sit forever in the hearth-smoke, you know." His teeth flashed in the dark. "Besides, I am not a pirate at all. I am doing the same thing my illustrious ancestors must have done, the same thing your great-grandfather Amenhotep did in Syria and the Aegean chiefs are doing now on the northern mainland—conquering myself a kingdom. We are only bandits if we fail."

She laughed aloud this time, with the merriment he thought she should never have lost. It was beginning to lighten just a little, a dull gray stealing into the sky and paling the stars, and the deck was wet with dew.

He could see her more clearly, a young and slim and very beautiful being, and suddenly he said: "Ankhsenamen, it should have been plain that I was your enemy. I don't like danger where it can be avoided, and on your account I was forced to risk ship and men and life. And I don't think you liked me much either. But minds have to change. Let's be friends, shall we?"

Her eyes widened. "Thank you," she whispered.

"Tell Pepy," he said with a grin. "I haven't enjoyed the way he's looked at me and felt the edge of his knife."

Presently she yawned, rubbing her eyes

like a little girl, and went back to the cabin. Thoas stood by the oar watching the sun rise in whiteness over the great low land of Egypt.

"Good morning, my lord Aton," he said softly. "Good morning."

TRAFFIC began to thicken on the river as the day waxed, barges and dhows and sea-going galleys and boats plying between the little villages and towns which clustered along the banks. The wind fell and Thoas put his protesting men back at the oars. He and Akhmet had to knock down a couple, and he was aware of surly glances following him.

"How long will it take us to reach the sea?" asked Pepy, squatting over a breakfast of the bread and water and dried fish with which Thoas always kept the ship supplied.

"Two or three days from Thebes, perhaps as much as four," answered the Cretan. "Depends on the wind, among other things."

"Hm." Pepy's eyes darted over the heads of the sweating rowers. Akhmet was pacing up and down the catwalk between the benches with a whip in his hand. "Yes, I can imagine what some of the other things are."

Thoas lowered his voice. "I'd almost welcome an attack from Pharaoh's troops. Then the men would know we have to get out of the country and be with me. As it is, I can't tell them the real reason for our flight, or they'd blame me—not unjustly—for risking their lives without asking their consent on an errand of little profit to them. Someone would be sure to propose turning Ankhsenamen in for a reward, and then there'd be trouble."

"I thought you were the captain here," said Pepy snappishly.

"Only while I can dominate them. These are pirates, man, not your spirit-broken hirelings of the Nile. I'd trade my soul for a crew of the old Cretan navy, but no such thing is to be had these days."

"If we get away," said Pepy, "I'll give something to all the gods, just to be sure that the one who helped us is paid. I'd make a larger offer to a certain little joss who is very powerful, but I left him behind in Thebes."

"Where will you get the means for such a sacrifice? There are a lot of gods, you know, and you'll be poor as a Libyan mouse."

"Oh, you have plenty of cattle, don't you? My lady said you would be our friend."

"Not for that sort of foolishness," rapped Thoas. The dwarf could make him angry at times.

He got up and stalked forward. The day was already hot, he itched with sweat and flies buzzed around him. Sleeplessness was sandy under his eyelids. And it went so slowly! They crawled over the sun-glaring water, the creak and rattle of oars chewed at his nerves, the banks crept past. Wasn't there a wind to be had in this cursed land?

Ankhsenamen came to stand beside him. Her eyes were red, she had been crying, and her voice was low. "We are nearing Akhetaton," she said.

"So?" He was mostly irritated—with her, with the sun and the river and the wallowing ship and the whole blasted world.

"Nothing," she said tonelessly. "I just wanted to say good-by to it."

The city appeared over the horizon and they went past. Very white and fair was Akhetaton, dreaming between stony cliffs on the banks of father Nile. Coming upstream, Thoas had thought it perhaps the most beautiful city he had ever seen. But it was dead, empty, only a few old men lived a ghostly existence in its hollow streets and soon they would die and the sands would drift in and Akhetaton would be forgotten.

"We had a garden," murmured the girl. "We had many gardens, but I remember this one so well. It was cool and green within high walls, and there were lotuses growing in a small lake where wild ducks swam. We used to walk together in the evening, father and mother and we sisters, and he would feed the birds and a slave would be playing a harp and singing to us. There was more laughter and kindness in Akhetaton than I have ever met since."

Thoas wiped the sweat from his face. A drop had gotten into his eye. It stung.

"So good-by, Akhetaton, and sleep well," she said. "There was never a fairer city than you, or a fairer dream than you housed. Good-by, good-by."

His tongue seemed to snap of itself:

"Yes, a pretty notion, this loving kindness for everything that lived and no thought of whether or not it deserved to live. A very bright bubble which could only have grown in the brain of a sick and sheltered child."

She faced him with a sort of horror. "What do you mean?" she whispered. "What do you mean?"

"I mean that Akhnaton failed his country and brought the ruin of Egypt, and it is his fault that we have to flee now with death at our heels." The words were angry, hard and flat on the hot still air. "While he walked in his beautiful gardens and wrote hymns to the sun, Aziru and Shubbiluliuma were peeling his empire from him. I saw Byblos fall, I was a lad there when the enemy was roaring at the gates and the loyal old chief cried to Pharaoh for help. They say that Aziru wrote slanders about him, and that Akhnaton listened to such lies rather than send men who might kill the enemies of his friends. Rather than fail in his love for all mankind, he let those men who loved him be hacked down and their wives and children be sold into slavery. Cities stood ablaze for want of the troops he could have sent. But no, he loved everyone and Aton forbade killing." Thoas grinned nastily. "Though I don't suppose it was wrong to kill the fly that bit Pharaoh, or the cow he ate, or to drag slaves from Kush and Syria to serve his pleasure." He dropped a hand to his sword hilt. "By Minos, Horemheb is the best thing that happened to Egypt in fifty years!"

"Oh—you too—" She began to cry, but fought back the sobs and walked away with lifted head and stiff back.

I suppose it was unfair, thought the Cretan wearily. *I suppose I should ask her pardon. But can't these people see the truth? Will they need their gold and their courtiers all their lives? Curse it, Knossos was a fair city too.*

THE sun flamed into noon and waned westerly. Thoas, stalking down the catwalk, caught a solid wave of human stink, sweat and blood and muttered oaths. The unloaded galley went fast, but her speed was dropping little by little as men came still tired to their shifts. There was a smoldering hate in the eyes that followed him.

At midafternoon, the breathless dancing heat lessened with a gust of wind. Out of the north—the north! Thoas groaned and swore.

"As if we hadn't woes enough," he muttered to Akhmet the Nubian. "Will the breeze endure long?"

"I think it will stiffen. See, there are tiny waves on the river."

"Blowing us down hell-road. Stand by for trouble."

Thoas went on to the cabin. Pepy and Ankhsenamen sat together in what little shade it offered, outside the door. Wordlessly, Thoas entered, got helmet and cuirass from a chest, and donned them. When he came out, the dwarf looked at him inquiringly.

"Do you expect the troops so soon?" he asked low-voiced.

"Mutiny, perhaps," answered Thoas. "The men know little save that their lives are in danger through no fault of their own, and that I am driving them like slaves, and now the very wind is their foe. If fighting starts, get into the cabin."

"Will not your appearing in armor provoke the very trouble?" asked Ankhsenamen. Her voice was so quiet he could scarcely hear it, and she did not meet his eyes.

"Better a live troublemaker than a dead peacemaker," grunted Thoas. His unspoken thought ran on between them: *As your father should have known.*

He mounted the deck and stood looking down the long well of the oarsmen. The sun ran in fire off the bronze of his armor; Ankhsenamen turned dazed eyes from him but his burning after-image stayed in her vision. For a moment there was stillness, only the stridulent oars had voice.

Then a man spoke aloud, harsh and angry: "What do you do in metal, Thoas?"

"If I choose to wear armor, it is my affair," answered the captain coldly. "However, it may be that the Egyptians are close behind. We may all have to don our gear soon, unless we can outrow them."

The man stood up on his bench. It was the rebellious Cyprian, Megacles, a big and wrathful man with matted elf-locks plastered to his streaming face. His oar rattled loose in the rowlock and the others broke their rhythm. Men sleeping exhausted between the benches stirred uneasily, sat up and looked blearily around.

"Get back to your work, Megacles," said Thoas.

"Not before I've had some honest answers," replied the Cyprian. "I want to know why we are fleeing this way, and who this woman is you are carrying off, and what reward has been given you. All of us want to know."

They stirred uneasily on the benches, growling, reaching for the knives at their belts, and some glared at Thoas and some at Megacles. The sun wavered in its veil of heat, and the wind mounted, and the ship drifted idly on the river.

"Back to work, you!" Akhmet came down the catwalk with the ax in one hand and the whip in the other. Men snarled up at him out of gaunt, bearded faces, and he held the lash loose.

"No!" Megacles raised his voice. "We aren't your slaves, Thoas, we're free sailors who have a right to some say in our lives. By Attis, men, shall we take any more of his insolence? If he won't at least tell us why we are here, then overboard with him!"

Another sailor rose, and in a sudden hideous dismay Thoas recognized one of the four who had accompanied him to the palace. He had chosen them for trustworthiness and promised them an extra share in the pay, but—

"I was there," said the man. "I know. And we can't escape the death that's behind us, not if we keep on in this crazy way."

"What is it?" roared Megacles, and the mutterings in throats grew to a ragged bellow. "What is it? Tell us, by Attis!"

"She is a nobleman's daughter," cried Thoas, "but she has nothing to do with—"

"Nobleman, hah!" shouted his sailor. "She's the queen of Egypt, men, that's who she is, and all the troops of Pharaoh are out after her!"

There was a moment's silence, they could not grasp the fact at once, they stood like graven devils.

Thoas spoke loudly: "There is great reward in conveying her to safety, more than we could win in a hundred voyages. Whoever is my friend and stands by me now will be rich."

Megacles leaped by on his bench. "Against all Egypt?" he yelled. "Kill this madman, I say, kill him and turn the woman back to Pharaoh for our lives and what he'll pay us!"

Thoas drew his sword and there was metal in his call: "Stand by me now, comrades, stand by and help us flee, or surely Pharaoh will flay us all alive!"

Akhmet grinned savagely and swung his ax. The skull of Megacles split like a rotten melon. Swiftly the Nubian sprang back toward the bows as a dozen knives flashed at him.

"To me!" bellowed Thoas. "To me and Akhmet, all who would stay alive!"

A sailor came snarling up the ladder at him. Thoas stabbed him in the breast. Two others seeking to follow were assailed from behind by a couple of Thoas' party, who took stances below the poop.

"Pepy!" shouted Thoas. "Pepy, in the cabin—weapons!"

The dwarf was already there, staggering under a load of swords and shields. A hurled knife gleamed past his head and thunked into the sternpost. Down in the hull, men reached into the chests under the benches for their arms.

"Here—Thoas, here—"

He turned and saw Ankhsenamen handing up a pair of bows and loaded quivers. Briefly, he smiled at her. "Good!" *Well done, daughter of the Amenhoteps!*

Stringing the bow and nocking an arrow, he drew careful aim at the uncertain, swaying mass of the sailors. A mutineer stood up on his bench crying death for Thoas, and tumbled, clawing at the shaft in his throat. A pair of men trying to storm Akhmet's foredeck screamed as the bowstring hummed.

Men were milling warily about, backs to the rails, growling and making passes with their blades but few ready to do battle on either side. A half dozen stood at each end of the ship, committed to the captain.

"Down there, Akhmet!" called Thoas. "Down and smite them!"

HE HIMSELF leaped to the benches and attacked the nearest mutineer. Bronze flared hot under the sky, banged and rattled and drew shrieks. Thoas and his tight-clustered followers fought their way down the length of the ship to join Akhmet by the mast. Sailors fell in with them as they advanced, including many who had cried

mutiny, and even those who fought did so half-heartedly and were swiftly disarmed. In moments there was peace.

Ankhsenamen mounted the poop and looked forward. There was less death than she had thought, but five corpses rolled with the ship and many were wounded. Blood splashed the planks and there was groaning under the hot mumble of wind. The unpowered galley wallowed and drifted southward.

Thoas came up to her, grinning and wiping his blade. "You did well," he said. "One would have thought you'd been a pirate queen all your life."

"You—I—it was a matter of life and death for me, you know," she whispered, and wished she could add that his death would have meant something to her as well.

"And you can act at such times, as I ought to know by now," he said. "Ankhsenamen, forget my words earlier today—will you?"

She tried to cover her confusion by stammering: "How swiftly you put down the revolt!"

He shrugged. "If those things don't have a chance to get organized, there is only a witless mob which a few determined men can soon disperse. We were using the flats of our swords most of the time." Grimly: "We'll need all our men soon."

"Do you think they will catch us, then?"

"Most likely. With the men tired, and five dead and others hurt, and this damned wind to fight, and—well, Pharaoh's officer can load two hundred troopers on a swift Nile barge and row them in shifts of fifty—twice or thrice ours—and still use them only half as often as we must work. All that has saved us so far has been whatever delay they had in starting the pursuit, and that cannot have been too great."

"And what will happen when they find us?"

"Why, they'll board us, of course, unless we're mad enough to board them first, and then we'll fight it out hand to hand. Whatever else happened when ships did battle, unless one could somehow set fire to the other?"

"And we cannot do *anything?*"

"I don't know, Ankhsenamen, I cannot say. Perhaps we can slip past them in the dark, if the gods give us till night. Perhaps we should abandon ship altogether and try to get disguised to Memphis and buy passage there for Cyprus. Perhaps we should stand and fight and win." Thoas grimaced. "None of it sounds very likely, does it?"

"And if we are caught—"

"You must take your own counsel. As for me, I don't intend to be taken alive."

She nodded, very slowly, and he saw the slim shoulders stiffen. Quietly, she said: "It is not right. Find me a boat and let me wait on the river for them."

"What?" he cried. "You'd leave and go back to—"

"To the same thing that awaits me if I stay with you." She smiled, but he saw the trembling of her lips. "I have nothing to gain by remaining here, and your life—all your lives to lose. Let me go, let me go so you can escape with the treasure and—and remember me, Thoas."

He shook his helmeted head, wonderingly. "I will never understand you, girl," he said. "You stood two kingdoms on their heads, and sailed for open sea with a gang of cutthroat outlaws, and pulled the wealth of Egypt from under Pharaoh's nose to pay your way—and now you would give up what little chance remains, out of comradeship for men who tried to kill you."

Decisively: "But it is no use, my fair one. There is a little matter of some dead palace guards, and the crime we have committed in stealing you away, and all the trouble we have given the king, and all the loot we have from him—oh, he'd be on our tail just the same." He laid a hand on her shoulder and smiled. "No, no, stay with me, girl."

She shivered and crept against the hardness of his breastplate. Gently, he stroked her hair and kissed her on the forehead.

She laughed a little and whispered: "Is that how the Sea People make love?"

He pulled her close, remembered that he was in plain sight of a shipful of red-handed ribalds, and let her go. "Later," he said, softly and gladly. "But not much later, my dear!"

CHAPTER 3

PEPY came grinning up the ladder. "That's captaincy, my lord Thoas!" he said. "That was the way to lead men—if they won't follow you for love, beat some of it into their thick skulls. Hee-hee! Lis-

ten to the slave instructing the captain." He squatted on his haunches before them, a black spider in the sunlight. "But what now, eh? How do we get away from our friends?"

"We don't, I think, unless you have a plan," said Thoas.

Pepy scratched his head. "No. No, not a one, my lord, not a one. My poor wits are quite addled with this queasy ship-motion. I can only suggest that we should begin rowing again instead of talking about it."

"Hm, yes. Give the men a moment or two to rest. I was thinking, though. You know Egypt well enough, Pepy. What are our chances of slipping ashore in the guise of plain peasants?"

"Oh, about like the chances of rolling a thousand sixes in dice, one after the other. Think you not that all Egypt will be out for our blood and the reward of Pharaoh? How would you fool even the dullest fellah into taking any of us for his kind? No, I'll die on shipboard, thank you, and then somebody else can eat the fish that eat me. Hee-hee!"

Thoas nodded tiredly. The wind ruffled the plume on his helmet—the wind, the hot dry wind of Egypt, the cursed hell-wind blowing out of the north. "We may as well get started again," he said in dull tones.

"We may outrun them even now, you know," said Pepy. "Or if we must make a battle—well, if you can do as you just did, captain my lord, I will have no complaint. What is it you Cretans call the Apis bull? Minos, yes, you stood and faced them and gored them down like the bull Minos himself."

Thoas let his mind drift back to Cyprus, to the great-horned black cattle who grazed his father's windy upland pastures and to the sacred bullfights which some of the exiled Cretans still held each year. *If one were only a bull, if the rest were men who fled and screamed and went down under hoofs and horns, a bull bearing Ankhsenamen home to Cyprus. . . .*

Of a sudden he stood dead still, and they looked at him without comprehension. Only the girl thought she knew that face, the stare of a man who sees a holy revelation. Her father had borne it, often and often as he came from the temple of Aton—but this was a fiercer god who had revealed himself to Thoas, and she shivered and fingered the amulet at her throat.

"A bull," he muttered. "Aye, aye, by all the gods, a black bull from old Crete!"

"Eh?" said Pepy.

Thoas whirled and shouted for his men. An anchor splashed overboard and metal gleamed anew. But these were carpenter's tools, thought Ankhsenamen dazedly. They were ripping up the cabin and the decks, they were swarming in a confusion of bodies and voices and Thoas went among them like an unleashed whirlwind.

"What is it?" she cried. "Why aren't we fleeing? What are you doing?"

He gave her a glance that was bright with a wild strange merriment. "We're going to fight instead," he called, "and I am building a little temple in the bows—to Minos!"

THE long Egyptian day drew to a close. Standing on the remnants of the poop, Thoas saw the sun-disc red and huge in the west, throwing a bridge of light across the water to his ship. The river flowed broad and quiet and almost deserted between its reedy banks; small waves crossed it, ruffled up by the steady north wind against which the galley toiled downstream. Beyond lay the valley of Egypt, flat green land reaching to the horizon and the deserts beyond.

He had a feeling of the straitness of this realm, bordered by wastes of rock and sand, roofed in by the mighty vault of sky. It seemed to him that the soul of a people must come from the landscape that formed their bones and flesh and thoughts. Crete, where the mountains ran down to the sea, had been half wild, gay and reckless, light as a gull flying. But the soul of Egypt was bound between deserts to a mightily rolling river, and it had grown strong and narrow, marching down an endless road that ran to eternity but had no turnings and no by-ways. It was an ancient and mighty spirit, it was gray in the youth of kingdoms which were now blowing dust and it would still be walking down its road when the empires of today lay wrecked and buried, but it was not the spirit of the Sea People and the dwellers north of the water. It was not his.

Ankhsenamen came to stand beside him where he held the steering oar. He looked

at the airy loveliness of her and remembered that she had blood of Asia in her veins and was herself half an alien in this land.

She said nothing for a while, simply stood facing into the wind that flowed around them. Finally she spoke: "You are a terrible man, Thoas. Men will die for I know not how many thousand years to come, because of what you have done today."

"If it works," he shrugged.

"If not, well, we will return to father Nile," she murmured. Her voice remained steady. "Still—Thoas, I am glad that I failed to wed the Hittite prince. And I am not too sorry to leave this country—with you."

He put a hand about hers. "Thank you, my little one. You will be a mother of kings."

She flushed. "Are you sure?" she whispered. "All the doctors in the empire could not make me have a child by Tutankhamen."

"Seeing that he had no children by any in his overly large harem, I think I know where to look for the trouble," he answered dryly.

She sighed. "I hope so. Poor little king! May he sleep well."

"Did you not care for him?"

"Oh, he was kind enough—but sick and weak and frightened. Save for stiff old Horemheb, who is my enemy, you are the only real man I have known, Thoas."

He grinned until she flushed again.

"Ship ho—behind us, captain, behind us!"

Thoas turned and looked south, down the long sun-flaming road of the Nile. A vessel was heaving into view around a jut of land—no, two, one after the other. It was hard to discern much at this distance, but they were plainly big Nile boats, and they were moving fast.

He raised the cry until the air rang with it: "To arms, men, get ready to fight!"

"Oh—" Ankhsenamen shuddered, and he laid an arm about her waist. "Oh, Thoas, are they the soldiers?"

"I don't know." His face set in tight lines. "I don't know, but it seems likely. Get down below this deck, beloved, get down and cover yourself with a shield."

"If they take us—"

How to buy better work clothes

GET long wear from the tough materials and rugged sewing that go into Blue Bell work clothes. Blue Bell dungarees are cut full so they don't bind. They're Sanforized, and keep their roomy, comfortable fit as long as you wear them. Reinforced with no-scratch copper rivets. Plenty of pockets.

Blue Bell Sanforized chambray shirts are cut to body contour for comfort, and topped by a dress-type collar for good looks. For outstanding value in all kinds of work clothes, look for the Blue Bell Qualitag, which guarantees you the best made, best fitting work clothes you can buy—*or your money back!*

BLUE BELL, Inc., Empire State Bldg., New York 1
WORLD'S LARGEST PRODUCER OF WORK CLOTHES

"Keep Pepy and his knife by you. He will do you that service at the last." He kissed her, long and hungrily. "Go!"

The sailors were in an uproar as they donned what armor they had, but it was the noise of fighting men and Thoas smiled to hear it. He went among them, placing some at the oars with shields to protect them, letting the rest stand by with weapons in hand. And he raised the sail. It slatted and banged on the yardarm, the ship yawed violently and he brought her around, southward again.

The pursuing vessels were sweeping in close, not a mile away now. Returning to the steering oar, Thoas looked past his own ship to theirs. Aye, aye, this was the enemy. Soldiers crowded the decks, the sunset light fierce on their arms, and the sweeps were moving like spider feet and the royal standard floated from the mastheads.

"Minos," he whispered. "Minos, be with us."

"Row!" bawled Akhmet, and his whip sang. "Row, you bloody knaves!"

The galley leaped ahead, foam springing from her bows, sail strained and oars flashing. Thoas drew his lips back in a grin that was a snarl.

The nearer of the Egyptian craft loomed before him. A voice drifted from its deck, faint against the wind: "Who are you? Halt before you crash!"

"What do you want of us?" shouted Thoas. "Have we any business with you?"

"Stop in the name of the Pharaoh! We want to search you for a fugitive—"

Thoas gripped his oar tighter. There went the last chance of getting by on pure trickery. Not that it had ever been a good one. Now let the Minos bull face Amen of Egypt!

"Halt, halt, you fool—halt!"

Arrows began to fly from the Egyptians, feathered shafts whistling out of the dusking sky to quiver in planks and shields. One of the pirates yelled and cursed and ripped a missile from his arm. Such of them as had bows shot back.

"Row!" howled Akhmet. "Give it to them! Row! Row! Row!"

The nearer vessel was dead ahead and Thoas, remembering other collisions he had seen, needed every nerve in his body to hold the oar steady. As well that the straining rowers couldn't see, he thought briefly. He luffed a little, approaching from broadside.

The arrows were thick around him. Dimly in the gathering twilight, he saw the hailing shafts fall among his men. Ahead, the soldiers of Egypt should have been making ready to grapple and board. But most of them were staring with bewildered horror at the ship which bore straight for them.

Now!

The crash went through the Cyprian galley like a giant's fist. Thoas stumbled and fell; the steering oar kicked at him and the screaming deck-planks rose to smite his ribs. He heard the high snapping of timbers and the shrieks of men, and rose dizzily and looked forward.

The Egyptian vessel was lurching aside, already listing as the Nile poured through the breach he had made in the frail hull. He grabbed for his oar again and Akhmet's whip cracked. The sail banged and rattled as they backed water and came about to face the other galley.

Those were not soldiers of the empire for nothing. Their officers raged among them, using their whips, cursing and bellowing. The arrows were like rain, Thoas saw his men hurt and killed even as they pulled free from the wreckage of the first enemy. This had to be fast!

Not enough room to get up speed—but perhaps the other boat could be disabled at least—"Down sail!" he roared. "Down sail!"

The canvas sagged to the deck as someone cut the lines. The pirates howled and threw their weight against the long oars. Slowly, churning the water, they got under way again, bound for their next opponent.

Its captain was a clever man, thought the Cretan grimly. He was bringing his own ship around to face bow on as the galley surged at him. That was the point of strength, if so weak a thing as a wooden ship had any. But—

Thoas put his oar over, feeling the water kick back against him. Forward—forward!

"Port oars—up!"

His men yanked their sweeps inboard, upward, out of the way. Carried by her own speed, the Cyprian craft slid alongside the Egyptian, and its own port oars smashed to kindling before her. Thoas heard the jagged screaming of men whose breasts were being stove in.

Only—

Sunlight flashed hot on the bronze grapples as men hurled them from the enemy deck. The metal bit deep, wood splintered, the attacking galley was held.

"Board them!"

The Egyptian commander sprang even as he shouted, tumbling from the higher deck to land with both feet on a pirate. They went over in a clash of armor, a sword gleamed, and the captain sprang erect with blood running from his weapon.

He was a big man in the trappings of the royal guard. The others who came leaping after him were common troopers, they probably didn't know the true reason for this pursuit—but he did, and now he had them! He stabbed out, catching one of Thoas' men in the throat, turned, and banged aside a spear probing for his guts.

"Cut those grapples!" roared the Cretan.

Akhmet, with two men at his heels, bounded over the rowers' benches. His ax flared, tautened ropes sang as he slashed them. An Egyptian lunged for him; he kicked out with one long leg and sent the man stumbling back across the seats.

"Pull!" yelled Thoas above the rising din of combat. "Starboard oars—pull free!"

SLOWLY the galley wallowed aside, a man's length of muddy water grew between the two vessels—and the Egyptian, with only one bank of sweeps, could not close the gap. But there were nearly as many soldiers aboard now as pirates, fighting like devils near the bow. *And even if we kill them all,* groaned the mind of Thoas, *we'll lose too many of our own folk to escape.*

He jumped from the poop to the catwalk. "After me!" he shouted. "Drive them into the river!"

The Egyptians were gathered now in a tight rank of swords and shields under the foredeck. Dead men sprawled in front of them, and the galley crew drew back with a snarl. Their tall commander whirled his reddened blade over his head.

"Surrender!" he boomed. "Surrender yourselves to the justice of Pharaoh or feed the crocodiles!"

Thoas went among his men, where they stood unsurely on the catwalk and down in the rowers' well. "Archers!" he snapped. "Shoot them down."

An arrow from the Egyptian line grazed his arm, another hummed nastily by his cheek. One of his men stumbled, clawing at the thing in his breast. To stand and fire would be sheer butchery on both sides —and that remaining galley could still come up to them somehow.

"After me!" cried Thoas again, and moved up to the enemy.

A spear scraped off his breastplate. He stabbed after the man who wielded it, felt his sword go home in flesh and ducked low. The blade of another slashed at his arm, he fell to one knee and let it glance from his helmet. Blood ran hot along his face.

Yanking his sword free, he jabbed upward, into a bare leg. The Egyptian stumbled, and Akhmet's shearing ax clove his neck. Thoas drew back a little and rammed his weapon before him. It caught in the frame of a shield. The man behind it chopped at his wrist, and he let go as edged metal whistled by his fingers.

The pirate on his right went down with a spear in his shoulder. Thoas snatched the dropped sword out of the air and went up again. Blows clanged against his blade, and he could hardly move in the press of men.

"Forward!" shouted the Egyptian chief. "Clear the ship!"

His sword danced like a fiend, striking, stabbing, knocking aside the thrusts against him. Another Cyprian toppled under his feet. Thoas felt rather than saw his own ranks waver.

"By Minos!" He stepped over a wounded man and engaged the Egyptian leader. "One of us—"

The bronze clashed together. Thoas felt the blows shiver in metal and back through his own muscles. Beyond the enemy shield, he saw the lean brown face impassive, frowning a little as the man probed for his life. There was a gleam of sweat on the Egyptian's forehead.

Thoas growled and stood where he was, beating aside the thrusts at his neck and face and lower belly, raking in with his own sword. The Egyptian's shield was a barrier from behind which a snake's tongue licked out. Whirr, clang, and sunlight flaming westward!

A sudden idea which was less a thought than an act of blind desperation—Thoas stepped backward. There was a dead hand underfoot, fingers lax on a sword. He

picked it up in his left. The Egyptian commander lunged at him.

Thoas swept his right-hand sword in a clumsy arc that hit the shield and twisted it aside just a little. His left blade struck instantly. The blow shocked home.

Gasping, he saw his enemy sink slowly to the deck, spewing his life red on the planks. A soldier yelled and struck. Thoas took the stab on his armored breast and his own arm straightened with death at its end.

"Men of Egypt! Look! Look here, O Pharaoh's warriors, look up here and see what I have!"

The shrilling cut slowly through the fight, men lifted their eyes toward the poop, pirates and troopers halted for a moment, staring at what was up there.

Ankhsenamen stood on the raised deck. The sunset light was a ruddy fire-streak in her dark blowing hair, and it glanced off the tears across her face. Pepy crouched black and monstrous beside her, one arm about her slim waist, the other brandishing his dagger. In the red luminence it seemed to run blood.

"Look well, Egyptians," cried the dwarf. "This is the lady of the royal house, daughter of Pharaoh, whom we are stealing for ransom. We don't mean to harm her—but unless you lay down your arms, she dies and her holy blood is on you!"

They stood there, unmoving, jaws slack, eyes wide and wild in the tired faces. For a moment that thrummed into forever, they stood wondering—the men of Egypt, the common soldiers who knew not that Ankhsenamen was to be brought home to her death—men who understood that it was better to pay for a treasure than have it thrown away by the robbers and evil fall on the land.

A slow mutter went around the unstirring ranks, and one by one their lifted swords and spears began to drop. Their commander could have enlightened them, but he was a corpse rolling on the deck, and they were only plain troopers.

Thoas sprang up on the catwalk. "It is true," he said. "Lay down your arms, and we will set you ashore. We are agents of Hatti who wish only to use the royal lady as a bargaining point. She will come to no harm."

"No, they will not hurt me, if you yield," said Ankhsenamen. With a sudden imperial ring: "I command you!"

And the Egyptians surrendered.

Thoas looked over his crew. He'd lost more than he liked, but there were enough left to man the ship. His orders cracked out: a guard placed over the prisoners, and the rest to the oars. There might be, probably was, another man in Eie's confidence aboard the disabled barge—but he'd take care of that!

He went downstream a good half mile, turned, and bore back on the other vessel, striking it broadside, amidships. The panicked men aboard it shed their armor and swam for shore. Behind them, the barge settled slowly into the water. The pirates released their captives at wading depth, and then they were alone on the river.

Akhmet came bounding up to Thoas where he stood on the poop, heedless of a dozen arrow gashes, laughing like a boy. "We sank them!" he cried. "Oh, my Captain, we sank them!"

"Our own hull?"

"She's banged up, and has sprung a lot of leaks. But nothing we can't caulk, even without careening. Your reinforced bows held up well, Captain. We can get to Cyprus without trouble. And we sank them!"

"And long before any other Egyptians are after us," said Thoas, "we'll be safe at sea."

He grew aware that Ankhsenamen was at his side again, laughing and weeping and clinging to him. He held her close.

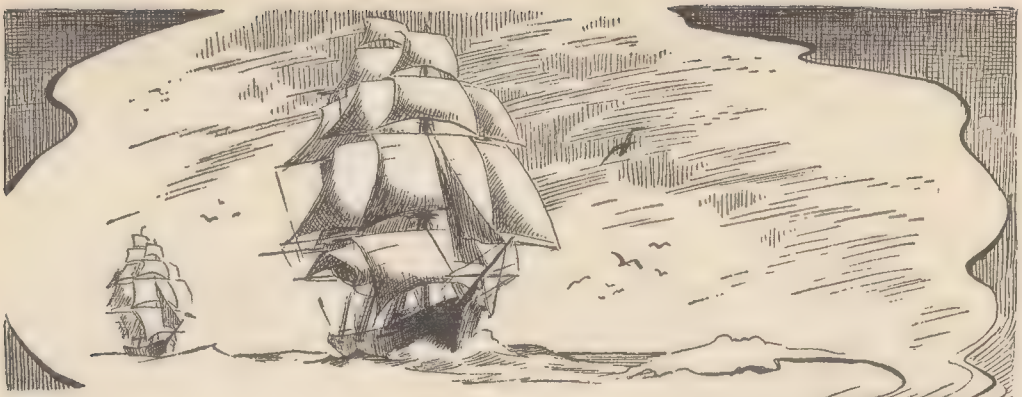
After a while he looked over her shoulder, down into the gleeful face of Pepy. "Well," he said, "your wit was not too seasick to save us. And Minos is still the sea god."

"But you are no bull, my lord," chattered the dwarf. "You were not black and clumsy, you hit them with skill, grace, oh, it was a lovely sight!"

"When we get back to Cyprus," said Thoas reflectively, "I'll start building ships which can really do this kind of work. A bronze beak—yes, my small one, you'll be a queen of the Sea People yet."

"Not a bull," repeated Pepy. "A ram, a ring-horned supple ram. Hee-hee! Yes, my lord, one might say you rammed them!"

They began rowing north again, and slipped past Memphis in the dark out to the delta of the Nile. Dawn showed them the sea, and rising out of eastern waters the sun, day-god, the bright and loving Aton.



ROVER-YEARNING

By C. Wiles Hallock

If a barnyard close was a harbor ship
And a pasture-lot was a bay—
If a farmstead barn was a freighter ship
Instead of a hold for hay. . . .
If a tremblin' prairie of wind-tossed grain
Rollin' wide as vision can reach
Was the billow spread of a mighty main
That breaks on a palm-decked beach—

I would steer a course by the evenin' star
When the old moon wanes in the west;
Where the meadow swell and wheat surge are,
I'd ride on a rover's quest. . . .
O, a windmill limned on the sunset sky
Is a lighthouse tower to me!
And I fancy waves in a field of rye
Like waves on a moonlit sea!

If an old, gray barn was a frigate craft
And this midland glebe was the deep
(I am inland lonely—and land-locked daft
From visions that haunt my sleep!)—
I would ship me off to a tropic shore;
And a wondrous emprise it would seem
To be a rover forevermore
By the spell of a clod-fast dream!

Blood Sky

McGafferty could either kill you—or die for you!

When one dead man's better than four, you don't cross McGafferty. . . .

By CHARLES J. DOYLE

LUMBOW cut the red-painted jeep off the dusty road, bounced it over the furrows of the headland, and turned down along the outside fence of the smooth meadow. The plane was circling the town for the third time, now, banking low above the gray blanket of smog that had been hanging in the valley for the past week. It roared low over the Jeep, and swung away.

"God Almighty!" Fletcher grunted. "McGafferty the Wrecker!" The *Tribune* man coughed hoarsely in the hot, acrid air. "God Almighty in a Piper Cub!"

Lumbow twisted in his seat, and fixed the reporter with red-rimmed eyes. "Fletcher," he growled, "you talk too much."

Adele stood up to see the light plane touch down and bounce at the end of the meadow. "See, Fletcher?" She laughed

dryly. "The man's got loyalties. McGafferty would have loved that crack."

"You've given him worse ones yourself, sweetheart. Mr. Disaster! I read the *Sun* sometimes too—for laughs."

"You'd laugh at obituaries! Me, I meant every word I ever hung on McGafferty, good or bad."

"It's been a long time bad, Delly," Fletcher said softly.

She didn't answer.

They watched the Piper jolt up, and McGafferty was on the ground, half running, even before the pilot had stopped. They watched the long stride bringing him closer, saw the hobbed boots, the dirty, stagged pants, the scuffed leather jacket, over the open shirt. The same battered old hat, jammed down over his red hair; his hips swinging in his rapid walk; his big, bony hands stuck down from the frayed cuffs. . . . McGafferty in his Come to Meeting clothes. . . . McGafferty at his job of work.

She closed her eyes a moment. How far back did it go? When hadn't she been doing stuff on McGafferty?

Away, way back, before she knew. When the headlines—her headlines, went: SHANTO DAM BURSTS . . . RORY MCGAFFERTY, DISASTER SPECIALIST, ON SCENE. . . . BLUE MOUNTAIN TUNNEL COLLAPSES. . . . MCGAFFERTY RESCUES FIFTY WITHOUT LOSS OF LIFE. . . . MCGAFFERTY CREWS HOLDING AT TEUPEHUL. . . . And then there'd been the Red in flood, and Hammondville and Duscharme, and the subway explosion in 1947, and the Craig Hall affair in '48 and, by her, McGafferty was a hero—a slab sided, hundred and ninety pound hero—with his big feet and his wide hips and his wider shoulders, and his knobby red hands always sticking out beyond the too-short cuffs. With his beautifully mauled and battered face, and the go to hell glint in his ice blue eyes—with the wild tangle of his curly red hair following trouble down through the years, and her headlines following him.

And then she knew.

McGafferty gave her a quiet look. He nodded at Fletcher. He lifted a long leg over the side of the Jeep, and slid down as Lumbow whipped it around in a tight circle. They hit the dirt road again, and Lumbow shoved a folded county map at his chief.

"Argos," he grunted. "Population, five hundred. Heavy foresting south of town. Heavy second growth all the way south east into the Reserve. One single gauge rail line running southwest, and this road here, for fourteen miles, out to route thirty. Natural break of an eighth of a mile between the town and the creek."

McGafferty nodded, his eyes going over the soiled paper. "Water?"

"The creek's between the town and the Gut. We might have to leave it. I had six tank cars run in full from the landing, and spotted on a siding. Four department pumps."

"Dozers?" the questions came automatically.

"Just three, but they're big."

"Powder?"

"Fifty cases on a flat, beside the tanks. And six more flats, waitin' behind a switcher, to clear the town, in case—"

"Yeah. In case." McGafferty rubbed a bony hand over his face. "She don't look good from upstairs, either over at the line, or here. But then, I couldn't see too much."

He twisted in the seat, and swung his red-rimmed, bloodshot eyes toward her. She saw the smudge of dirt on the side of his broken nose; the two day stubble that covered the flat planes of his face; the sheen of sweat in the bare, red hollow of his throat.

"Hi, Delly!" he half grinned. "How's the *Sun?*"

Hi, Delly! She shoved her jaws shut. Hi, Delly, and it'd been the same back then. Hi, Delly, and your heart bounced into your throat as his great rough bulk loomed over you. And the strong man smell of sweat and tobacco swept you in a delicious cloud and left your knees weak, and something inside you ached to have the huge-knuckled hands close over your arms, and draw you close. There'd been dirt on the face then, too, and sometimes, blood on the hands. And always, the great dark stains of sweat on the denim shirt. And the untouched feel of him, and the smell of him, and the virile magic that surged from a broken grin and the flash of the ice blue eyes, had sent you shaking into phone booths, trembling over typewriter—giving the world McGafferty, McGafferty the hero. But that was then.

She fought the curl that was riding into her upper lip. "Hi, McGafferty! What's the story?"

"You've got it, Delly."

"Come on, McGafferty." Fletcher leaned with his arms on the back of the front seat. "What gives? Are you holding her?"

"You know we're not holding her. We've been backing up since yesterday noon. We've got six hundred men out, in two thousand-odd acres, and still we're backing up."

Fletcher grinned. "Nice fumble at Pottsville—you backed too far!"

McGafferty swung, and the icy stare she knew so well frosted the bloodshot eyes. "Okay. So I fumbled. Print it that way. McGafferty blows half a town to make a break, and then the fire don't see it that way. It goes east through the draws, instead of west, and the town is safe. Safe except for what I did to it, and that was plenty. Give it to the *Tribune,* just like that, Fletcher. It might just occur to someone that I could have been right—that she could have come my way, and I'd have had her cold. Instead of that, she blows east, and we're still backing up."

Fletcher grunted. "God help Argos! You gonna blow it too, McGafferty?"

"I'd blow the belly outa New York City, if they were my orders, and that's what it took to stop her." McGafferty grinned. "I lost three hundred acres at Queria because I got soft hearted over a town. And Queria, too. It don't happen twice!"

And Queria, too. An afterthought. Adele stopped fighting the lip, and let it curl. The acreage came first. The three hundred acres, where the fire had beaten him, and backed him up, and sent him racing ahead to new lines. Queria, and her little buildings, and her little people, and their life savings—stunned, charred product of the aftermath, shrugged off. The acreage came first—the hard blow to your pride, McGafferty!

"I'm having trouble with the county agent," Lumbow said. "I'm having trouble with some of the people. They seen the powder."

"Yeah!" Fletcher grunted. "They've seen the powder. And they heard about Pottsville. And they know you're not God Almighty after all. When you fumble, you do it on the big side always—a half a town's worth!"

SWITCH TO MILD KENTUCKY CLUB

The Thoroughbred of Pipe Tobaccos

Get Fine Pipes at Worth-while SAVINGS

You bet it pays to switch to Kentucky Club. It's the thoroughbred of pipe tobaccos—choice white Burley specially blended to give you a mild, smooth smoke with grand taste and aroma. In addition, every package of Kentucky Club contains a valuable Dividend Coupon. Save these Coupons and get your choice of fine pipes at *big savings.* Beautiful pipes of imported briar made by expert craftsmen. 14 shapes. Do these two things today. Buy your first tin of Kentucky Club. Mail coupon for free catalog.

FREE Illustrated catalog showing Kentucky Club Dividend pipes and other premiums.

Mail Pouch Tobacco Co., Dept. 61, Wheeling, West Virginia

Please send—free—Kentucky Club Catalog.

Name.....

Street.....

City.....State.....

NO, McGafferty, you're not God Almighty, after all. Though there might have been the time . . . but that was back then. That was a hundred years ago. That was before you had to admit that the *Courier* was right . . . that Fletcher laid it on the line in the *Tribune* . . . that the *Herald* saw the things you were blind to. That was when Mr. Disaster was born. And your banner changed. . . .

WHAT PRICE SAFETY? QUARTZ HILL ROCK SLIDE WRECKS HALF BLOCK. . . . SEVEN KILLED IN SLUM SECTION. . . . MR. DISASTER ORDERS EVACUATION. . . . BLOWS REMAINING FIVE THOUSAND TON OVERHANG ENGULFING ENTIRE SECTION. . . . MR. DISASTER STRIKES AGAIN. . . . FLOOD DAMAGE TO ELMIRA HALF MILLION. . . . MCGAFFERTY DYNAMITE AND BULLDOZER DAMAGE ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL QUARTER MILLION. . . THE CRESWALL CAVEIN OR MR. DISASTER—TAKE YOUR PICK. . . .

And now, it was Argos. Population, five hundred. And a week old fire roaring through the Bear Hills, out of control along a single, east west front—and McGafferty.

The Jeep swung around the railway station, and McGafferty's section boss slid it to a stop before the crowded platform. A silent, sullen crowd gave way, and let them through.

"I set it up in here," Lumbow said. "You got a good view of the front, and contact with Sections One, Two, and Three." He motioned to the operator.

McGafferty said, "Any change?"

The man with the phones lifted his tired eyes. "Holding on One and Two. Section Three lost two miles in the last two hours. It jumped the Smithfield break. Still an east west front, wind north, nor'east, steady to full, at thirty-five."

"Pull a hundred men off One and Two. I want that center held." He spread out the soiled map and drew a short red line below a series of lines.

"You're McGafferty?"

McGafferty straightened and nodded silently at the young, smooth faced county agent.

"I'm speaking for Argos—for the town. What are your intentions here?" His lip curled slightly, barely noticeably, on the last word.

McGafferty didn't seem to notice.

He said simply, "Put the fire out."

"I want—the people want more than that, McGafferty! They've got their town at stake, and they want to know."

"Okay." McGafferty beckoned him to the map. "I show you. You tell them. They either listen to you, or they don't. Either way, it makes no difference. I stop this one at Argos, or I don't stop it at all!" His big finger moved along the map. "You know this country better than I do, but I know my fires. Here's what this one's doing." His finger moved again. "She's burning thirty-eight miles away, on a twenty-five mile front, coming this way. It's all second growth on the hills, and light enough to slow it down. That's Sections One and Two—the flanks. Section Three is different. That's the belly of it. In front of that we've got all old pine, straight down the valley, along the road. The Gut, you call it. This map puts the north end of that Gut just four miles this side of Section Three. Inside an hour, there'll be a total of three hundred men in there, working for your town, but you know what happens if we can't hold her, or turn her inside those four miles?"

"Dynamite!" The younger man's lip curled. "Pottsville!"

McGafferty's face hardened. He nodded shortly. "But at least I'll give my reasons. Look, sonny—" The blunt finger made a straight angry gash through the center of the map. "I've just been over your Gut in a Piper Cub. Thirty-four miles long, hill elevations eight hundred to a thousand feet, packed solid with first growth pine, because it makes nice scenery along your road, and nobody had the heart to drop them. You know what your Gut is, Sonny? It's the nicest, God-made funnel you ever saw, to pull that mess on Section Three right into Argos. And once it hits that Gut, I'm putting no crews in ahead of it. It'd be suicide."

"We've got an eighth of a mile between here and the Gut. And the Pottsville Creek, to boot. Even if it does come down, they don't jump that far, McGafferty."

"They don't?" McGafferty's grin was carved in iron. "When that mess explodes into the tall stuff, and climbs up and starts to crown, it'll take a good Jeep, with a good driver, on a good road, just to stay ahead of it. She'll be coming at you at sixty or

seventy miles an hour, and at that speed, she just forgets about your poor little eighth of a mile. When she's been crowning for thirty miles, it's gas burning, sonny. The whole air's on fire. It just leans down, bends over your little creek, and keeps on coming."

"Okay! We'll take our chances. Burned out, or blown out, we lose both ways. We'll keep what we've got and see what happens."

"You'll keep your nose clean, and see the same thing." McGafferty grinned. "I'm making the decisions."

"Wait a minute!" A big man stepped out of the crowding jam in the doorway. "What goes—when and if it does go?"

Adele saw the menacing hunch of the big shoulders and heard the swelling ugliness in his voice. She saw him get the same, iron hard McGafferty grin. She saw the bony hand point out through the wide, dirty station windows to where a line of raw frame shacks marched down from the mill across the street, following the road to the Creek.

"God gave this place a pretty fair natural break, but somebody had to louse it up. Who owns the mill? Who owns those shacks?"

"You're talking to him now!"

"Okay." McGafferty said. "You built yourself a nice wooden finger—a tar roofed wooden finger, stretching two thirds across the natural break, to beckon the mess right into town. The finger goes!"

"Over my dead body, it goes!"

McGafferty shrugged. "Over it, or through it. Either way makes no difference to me. She hits that Gut—the finger goes! Now get out!"

HOW familiar that sounded, and how the years in between dropped into nowhere. The Shanto, in '43—and water and muck and mud—and a driving March rain hissing out of the howling, windy blackness. And an unseen hand on her arm, and a hoarse, tired voice in her ear.

"McGafferty? You'll find him in there. And you take your own chances, young woman. He's ate three reporters since dark!"

A construction shack pitched on the mud of the levee. A rough door she half fell through, into the yellow glare of a hurricane lamp, that stood on an upturned oil drum. The tired voice coming from behind, over her shoulder again, "Another reporter, boss. The people wants to know how we're doin'."

And McGafferty said, "Get out!" Two words.

She looked at him, sprawled on a tarp, on the floor, with his shoulders against another drum, and his chin fallen down on his chest. And he didn't look back. His eyes were closed, swollen, and drawn down into the lines of fatigue that marked his stubbled face. Grime made an earthy mask of the stubble, and deepened the lines, and his huge hands, curling open at his sides, were dark, muddy hooks.

"Get out!" McGafferty said, with his eyes closed. And a low groan followed the words.

"I'm sorry." The sudden pity was plain in her voice. "Maybe one of your men—"

The eyes dragged open, dark, and bloodshot. "A woman!"

"Adele Winters, from the *Sun*. I'm really sorry, McGafferty. I know what you've been doing. I know what you and your men have been through. It's just that I'm supposed to find out—"

The bloodshot flash went up from her muddy rubber boots, up and over the sodden trench coat, and into her eyes. "Hi, Delly!" A small, broken grin came out. "Hi, Angel Face! Now I could close my eyes and die in peace. Except you got mud on your nose. It looks like hell!"

She rubbed a cold, wet hand across her face, and McGafferty rolled to his hands and knees. For perhaps five seconds, he swayed there, his mouth hanging open from the force of his exertions, the pain of his body written in the twisted spasm of his face. Then he groaned again, and lurched upright.

"Seventy hours!" he muttered softly. "Seventy years in Purgatory! But we stopped her, Angel Face. We stopped her an hour before you walked in here. An hour before I dropped dead on this tarp."

"You look dead, McGafferty. Dead on your feet. When did you eat last?"

"I remember a Red Cross girl. A little, wet wisp of a thing, ten years ago. Maybe, it was fifteen. I remember coffee that was cold, and doughnuts with mud on 'em. But it didn't matter then. I was dyin' anyway."

She smiled in spite of herself. "I came in by the turnpike and the engineer's bridge on the other side. Route twenty is open for part way into town, and I remember a little place under the overhead tracks. Ten, fifteen minutes would do it."

He stumbled in his wet sock feet toward the thigh length rubber boots, lying against the wall. "So, I'm being propositioned. A gallon of coffee as the price of what goes. With the chance to look at a pretty face, and somebody's shoulder to cry on, while I'm doin' it. Right now, I don't even know if it sounds interesting."

"Now, look, McGafferty, I'm not trying to bribe you. I really feel sorry—"

"But I'll take it. We'll go find your little place under the tracks, and give someone else a chance to curse at McGafferty."

She said, "Pardon?" and she looked her surprise.

He was shrugging into the leather jacket. He cocked his head and raised a finger. "Listen," he said, and the dull, distant booming of dynamite shocks came into her ears. "Two-hundred-year-old elms, getting the powder. Six solid blocks of them, stretching along the Shanto, shading the lawns of a bunch of fools. Now they're dike filler. So're the lawns. And I'm a heel!"

Her battered, six-year-old roadster slewed and jolted in the rainy darkness, with the washed-out road somewhere beneath the layer of water that curled along the runningboards. A sandbagged wall made a long shadow to the right and, on the other side, great yellow monsters snuffed and wallowed, tearing their way through lawns and plant beds and shrubbery, the beams of their lights showing only mud and rain, and raw wet earth.

THEY came off the levee onto hard top, with the water still curling back from the radiator, and the sides of the road lined with faceless forms in black rubber and oilskins, and the jerking yellow blobs of storm lanterns making a firefly tail, off into the night. Then lights sprang up ahead, sickly, orange smears that barely penetrated the blackness. She gave a small snort of surprise.

"I heard, coming in, that the power station was fifteen feet under. How did you do it, McGafferty?"

McGafferty said, "Let there be light!" She caught the grin in the light of the dash. "I got a dozen Army generators hooked in. It helps a bit."

They were climbing steadily around the rise that circled the town to the east, and the water was behind them. McGafferty turned in the seat, and the grin was gone. His eyes went past her, down into the blackness, into the lifeless blocks outlined by the strings of orange smears, into the unseen currents that surged through the empty streets.

"A dead town!" he rasped. "A raped town! Prostituted by a few dozen Mr. Bigs, who had too much money to be talked back to!"

She said, "McGafferty?"

"The dam's engineer found that blowhole twenty hours before it ever blew. There were a dozen good dozers in town before I got here. I know, because I requisitioned them. There was also a hundred thousand tons of diking within a stone's throw, all along the Pike. They could have diked her. They could have held her. They could have had her beaten before she ever blew!"

"With velvet lawns and expensive ornamentals? And with two-hundred-year-old elms?"

"Exactly! But they waited for sand. They waited for cement. They waited for tailor-made fingers in the dikehole, and the water didn't see it that way. It blew while they were waiting. It blew while a bunch of stiff-necked property owners were standing with guns over their precious lawns and defying the engineers to put a dozer on 'em. And then, McGafferty came and the dozers came—but by then the town was killed."

"That's not your fault, McGafferty. I think you were wonderful."

"Tell that to the people. They forget the gangrenous growth that cost 'em a leg, because that's one of the forces of nature. It's blameless. Their fear and hate come down on the surgeon's knife that came in to save them. It's propelled by a human element, and gives them a vent for their feelings."

"Maybe," she ventured, "maybe if you explained. If you talked to them first—"

"There's no room in my work for talk. Not very often. It makes the job harder. And as long as the job gets done, and done right, let 'em roar."

"Do I print it like that? Is that the story?"

"Why not? You might as well set your dance to the same tune the rest of them play. You take a different line, and you only confuse the reading public. They like their whipping boy, and this way is the easiest—for you."

Her chin went up. "Good or bad, I do my own calling. I don't dance to anybody's tune, McGafferty, and it's time you got a break."

He said softly, "Don't be a torch-bearer, Angel Face. You'll get hurt in the long run."

They came down off the rise, to the intersection of route twenty, and the water was waiting for them a hundred yards beyond. A patrol job was parked, facing toward them, at the crossing. Its red blinker flashed warningly, and a cold, wet cop in oilskins got stiffly out of the front seat, and swung a flash in a jerky, irritable circle. She braked the coupe and rolled down the window.

"End of the line." The cop put his wet, drawn face into the light of the dash.

"Roll on!" the tired grunt came from the corner of the seat.

The cop's face tightened. "You want to argue about it?"

She lifted her shoulders, and jerked a gloved thumb. "McGafferty!"

"Oh!" The cop straightened, and his lip drew back. An indefinable emphasis was laid on the single word. "By me, it's okay. I should just let you go. Only I got a job to do." He bent his head closer. "The level has shifted, Mister McGafferty. She's two feet at the corner, and four feet under the tracks at State Avenue. Now, you still want to roll, that lets me out."

She was backing the coupe around, and the beams of the lights fell away from the stodgy oilskinned figure, standing in the rain, with his lip still curling back.

Adele said, "What slapped his wrist?"

"The powder and the dozers. It always does. He's a cop, Angel Face. He belongs to the town. It pays his wages."

They climbed to the rise again, and the rain was slacking off. Twice, she pulled over, as strings of trucks rumbled by, and then they were down to the levee.

"I'm sorry about the coffee, McGafferty." She waited a moment, and he didn't answer. Before they came into the mud, she looked sideways and the pity came back in her look. His angular form was braced sideways into the corner of the seat. His chin was back on his chest. He was asleep.

SHE stood on the steps of the Argos Hotel, and watched the slow procession come up from the creek and past her. Trucks and cars, and tractor-drawn wagons, and stoves and furniture and bedding piled high on all of them. They were clearing the seven shacks. They were moving because he ordered it, and because they knew he didn't fool. Either way, he said, and they knew he meant it. A red Jeep was going back and forth from the siding, with the flat, ugly cases showing behind the seat. Fletcher came out to stand beside her, and she nodded toward the creek.

"Is he jumping the gun?"

"Not exactly. He won't blow the works till the word comes through, but he's sure going to be ready when it does come." Fletcher blew through his nose. "Pottsville the second!"

"Maybe, this time, he'll be right."

"He better be! Look at the people!"

She saw the sullen, angry faces—the women moving by, some of them crying—the men silent and tight-faced. She stepped down into the dust, with her throat aching from the dry, smoky air, and her eyes burning slightly.

"The air's getting worse. Let's listen in at the station."

They came in through the open doorway, and the word came in with them. The operator just lifted his tired eyes, and nodded.

"Okay, boss. She's had it!"

McGafferty looked at the county agent. "Clear the town. Now! Clean her out. All women and children, and as many of the men as want to go. I've got crew enough here to handle the bit of equipment we've got. You take the string as far as the landing, and wait there for the word. Maybe it'll be good, and maybe it'll be bad. That depends on our luck." His eyes caught Lumbow's. "Take a last check through the shacks, and let 'em go."

They followed him into the road, and one of his men was backing off, trailing the double wires from a reel. He bent over the box beside the platform, with pliers in his hands and McGafferty watching impatiently.

"Wait! Wait, McGafferty!" A young

fellow, hardly more than a boy, rushed up across the street. "My stuff ain't out yet—the third house down. I never had a chance!"

"You had an hour." McGafferty looked at him coldly. "You had an hour, the same as the rest of them."

"I never had a minute. I hadda help Mr. Gerby get some of the mill stuff out. He's my boss—I hadda." He grabbed McGafferty's shirt front. "You gotta wait, Mr. McGafferty! Everything I own—"

McGafferty looked at the man bending over the box. "You load the mill too?"

"No. No time. We can blow it while the dozers are workin' the rest."

McGafferty pushed the boy away. "Tough, son! The fire's in the Gut and I don't own a minute to give you. Tough!"

He saw Lumbow come to the top of the hill, flash his arm in a wide double circle, without breaking his run. He stepped off the platform and put his foot on the plunger, and the line of shacks burst up into towering blossoms of dust and debris.

Adele winced as the rolling shock thundered, and the three big dozers came waddling from behind the station, even before the wreckage was out of the air. The boy loosed a strangled curse, and threw himself forward, but two of the other men had him by the arms. McGafferty stood, waiting easily, with the rock-hard grin on his face, and his big hands ready.

"Next time, sonny, you'll do as you're told. Gerby or no Gerby. Tough!" He shrugged then, and turned aside. "Lay two lines to the creek, and start soaking her down. Uncap the tanks, and set up the other two pumps at the siding." He caught Lumbow's eye again. "Load the mill. Load the next three buildings while you're at it."

An angry stir came from the crowd, and somebody snarled, "Pottsville!"

McGafferty stopped in his tracks, and his red rimmed gaze went over them coldly. "Okay! Pottsville! But this time, I don't have to guess. I'm not interested in your lousy town, understand? I'm just interested in stopping this mess, before the town feeds it back into the reserve, and lets it loose into another ten thousand acres. There's other towns back there that are just as important as this one, and I owe them something too. Clear your stuff out, while you still have time. You mightn't have too much of it!"

She came up beside him, with the quiet wonder rising in her mind. The loathing was plain in her voice.

"Same old Mr. Disaster! You haven't much conscience, have you, McGafferty?"

"Maybe I've got more than I have choice. But you've heard that before, haven't you, Delly?" He broke out the grin again. "Do I have any choice?"

"You don't have to be so damnably cold-blooded. These people have feelings too, you know. You could be a little more human. Or could you?"

"Would that get my job done any better, or sooner?"

"Your job! Something else I've heard before! Because it lets you be a destructive despot, and you revel in it, don't you, McGafferty? You love every minute of it. Look at the grin on your face!"

The grin went away. "You been writing that stuff for the last two years, Delly," he said in a tired voice. "Why don't you just write it again, and go away. You bother me!"

He gave her a long, hard look and turned his back.

THE dozers were roaring in the flat, blasted area. Their big blades were rolling and piling the shattered wreckage in long, clear paths, pushing the combustible debris down into the creek. They worked side by side like a team of great yellow bugs, and the cleared area grew rapidly larger. The creekside pumps were throwing out long, shaggy streams, over the tumbled piles, over the tinder-dry ground. Lumbow's bull-like roar came from here and there, as he passed McGafferty's orders down. She pushed past the watching men, down to where Fletcher was standing, and they both saw it together.

Fletcher said, "Hey, Delly! A kid!" He started to run beside her.

It was a little girl, maybe five years old. She was barefooted and dressed in ragged blue overalls, and her long pale curls fell down over the shoulder straps. She was poking in the wreckage of the third house from the mill; tugging vainly at the twisted handle of a shattered doll carriage that lay crushed under some planking. Adele bent and swept her up. A wail of anguish came from the tot, and her hard little body

writhed in her grip. The great blue eyes welled and overflowed, and the tears made dirty runnels down her brown cheeks.

"He's gonna love this!" Fletcher grunted.

"You poor little kid!" Adele soothed. "Where's your mommy?"

The wail subsided. "I ain't—I ain't—I just got daddy."

"And where is he?" the voice was McGafferty's, and the harshness of it, coming from behind, made her jump.

"The third house!" she snapped back. "It must be the boy, McGafferty—the one you blew up. The baby's carriage was just a part of it. Make you feel good?"

The boy was there then, pushing past them, reaching for the child, but McGafferty reached him first.

"I gave an order to clear this place. Women and kids!"

The boy backed away from the ominously twisting face and the reaching hands. "I was at Mr. Gerby's. I put Babsy with the neighbors and she must have come back. Honest, Mr. McGafferty—Mr. Gerby wouldn't let me leave—the stuff in the mill—"

McGafferty whirled and stalked up the hill, and the people moved silently back to let him pass. He turned in at the mill, and stepped over the boardwalk, and the thick-shouldered man was in front of him.

"I'm getting awfully tired of you, Gerby!" McGafferty said in a tired voice, as he came. "I gave an order to clear this place, and you kept that boy from looking after his own. All because of your lousy dollars tied up in this mill!"

The big man backed and threw up a hand. "Now, wait, McGafferty!"

It was as far as he got. McGafferty threw a high hard blow, a heavy, open-handed smash that staggered him sideways against the doorway, and dropped him to his knees. "When I give an order, it's law, Mister Gerby! And dollars don't count!" He looked back at Lumbow. "You got this place loaded?"

Lumbow nodded, and Gerby heaved back to his feet. He held one hand to his face, and the other went out in a pleading gesture.

"Give me an hour, McGafferty. Give me a half hour. I got more equipment—"

McGafferty turned on his heel. "Give him ten seconds!" he said to Lumbow. "Ten seconds to stand clear. Then, punch her!"

THEN punch her! That was Quartz Hill coming back again. That was the poor little rows upon rows of workmen's shanties. That was mud in the unpaved streets and windows without glass, and gray lines of sour washing sagging between the hovels. And flies buzzing in and out of the open doorways, and the rank smell of poverty in the humid air. That was the beautiful, towering backstop of Quartz Hill—the only thing beautiful left in the place, and the long, gashing scar, where the slide had come rumbling out of the night to pour over twelve of the hovels. But there were fifty of them left, weren't there, McGafferty, when you finished digging out the dead and the dying, and you found that thin, spreading fissure moving back from the rim, in the cold light of dawn. Fifty of them, looking like tiny, square pill boxes, from up on

AMAZING THING! By Cooper

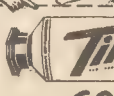
SENSATIONAL NEW TING CREAM FOR FOOT ITCH (ATHLETE'S FOOT) - REGULAR USE HELPS RELIEVE ITCHING - SOOTHES BURNING BETWEEN CRACKED PEELING TOES - AIDS HEALING AMAZINGLY!

FIRST USED IN HOSPITALS NOW RELEASED TO DRUGGISTS GUARANTEED

TING MUST SATISFY YOU IN A WEEK - OR MONEY BACK!

IN LAB TESTS TING CREAM PROVED EFFECTIVE IN KILLING SPECIFIC TYPES OF ATHLETE'S FOOT FUNGI ON 60 SECOND CONTACT!

EVEN IF OTHER PRODUCTS HAVE FAILED TRY AMAZING TING CREAM TODAY! GREASELESS, STAINLESS



ALL DRUGGISTS ONLY 60¢ A TUBE

the heights, as you loaded the hundred foot fissure in series.

And the state engineer recoiled from the sight. "For God's sake, McGafferty! Give them time to clear out!" He said it respectfully, because you were an engineer too, and topped him where it counted. Just like you topped all of them. But he couldn't keep his feelings out of his voice.

And McGafferty simply pointed to the open break. "Tell me how old it is. Years—months—weeks? And then prove it!"

The other man shook his head. What else could he do?

McGafferty said, "My estimate is less than ten hours. I say it opened when the slide came down. And I say there's another five thousand tons underneath, ready to follow it."

"But man! Two hours'd do it. Two hours'd let them clean out their stuff—"

McGafferty shook his head. "God's finger's on the trigger, not mine. How do I know He won't pull it in five minutes—or an hour and fifty-five minutes? How do I know it doesn't get pulled with two hundred and fifty people under it, risking their lives for a mess of junk? I've seen enough blood for one day!"

"But there must be some way. They're penniless, as it is."

"Maybe they're penniless," McGafferty grunted, "but they're alive. I'll keep 'em that way!" He stood up then and his men stood with him along the rim. His arms went through their warning wigwags, and down below, back of the cordoned area, the "All clear" came back up to him. And five minutes later, the face of the hill was in the valley, and the hovels were gone.

You walked down there too, didn't you, McGafferty? With the dust still rising from the shattered gray piles, and the wrenching grind of settling granite making a thin, dry sound in the stillness. You saw the hot, sullen faces—the misery and fear that rolled in the eyes. You heard the crying of children, and the moaning of women, and you saw the flashes of hate that followed you everywhere. And the old crippled preacher with the snow-white hair, who lifted his seamy face, and said, over, and over, "God forgive you, boss—may the good Lord forgive you." Did you hear him, McGafferty? Did that wipe the grin off your face—the grin that was your hallmark of pleasure—that told the world how you reveled in destruction?

And that was the night I told you too. In a place where they didn't know heartbreak and poverty—where the smell of Quartz Hill was a thousand miles off—where the lights were soft and the food was good, and they looked down their noses at your shabby old jacket. But they knew you and knew what you stood for, and the stuff I had written had helped them to know. So they looked down their noses with a cold, professional politeness that was stuck for a new way to say No. And maybe the set of your chin, or the glint in your eye made them forget how to say it. Or maybe the name was enough. So you pushed in my chair at the best table in the house, and came around opposite. And the cold looks came bouncing from all over the room. But you didn't care, because you were McGafferty. And I didn't care because my thoughts had never been in the room. They were twenty-five blocks away, where there were no soft lights or good food, and the night had closed over the rubble. And I couldn't hear the music that kept your foot tapping. My ears were full of the sound of the granite, and the low, soft sobbing of women.

"What's the matter, Angel Face? You got a look like a long lost dog."

"You hit it, McGafferty. But a dog shouldn't feel like I feel!"

"You're hungry, that's all. And if you were half as hungry as me, you'd be dead of starvation. We'll fix that." He caught a waiter's eye, and the bony hand went up. The man came forward reluctantly, yet unable to help himself. "Steak, lobster, the best in the house, huh?"

"Please, Rory. I'm really not hungry. Honest."

"Okay. I'll eat for us both till you are. When you get tired of watching me drool, you can pick up your tools and wade in." He looked at the waiter. "Two of everything. The works, and all that goes with it!"

She shivered and put her face in her hands, and his hard fingers closed on her elbow.

"What's wrong, Angel Face—am I out of my class? The clothes should be back in some greasy-sleeve diner?" His voice was quiet and low. "You're ashamed. Is that it?"

"No! I wasn't even thinking of clothes. I was thinking of this morning. I can't get it out of my mind. How horrible it was with all those poor people—"

"Forget it, Delly!"

"Forget it? How can you sit there and just say, 'Forget it?' How can you eat or sleep or even live with yourself, with all those poor, shocked faces coming up—"

"They don't come up at McGafferty! I do my job and then I move on. And when I go, I take nothing with me. Faces, or anything else." The pressure increased on her arm. "Come on, Angel Face. Put it behind you and loosen up. Didn't we come here to celebrate?"

"Celebrate?" She felt the coldness creeping in.

He grinned. "It's been nearly two months. Next time may be longer." He leaned back as the lobster came down between them. "Man! Have we been waiting for you! Get into it, Delly!"

"Rory," she said numbly, "I want to go home."

His head came up slowly, not comprehending. "Home?" The blue eyes flashed to the laden table between them. "Home?" he repeated.

"No! I mean, alone. You stay." She heard the low growl come up in his throat.

"You wouldn't do that—you wouldn't walk out on me, Angel Face?"

"Don't call me that. It doesn't mean anything, any more. I've been thinking, McGafferty—thinking all day. And I think I've been wrong all the time."

"About me?"

"About you. I tried to keep telling myself that you couldn't afford to have feelings—that your job was your job, and you had to be tough. I tried my best to sell myself a bill of goods, and every time I tried, it came back sour. Every time I tried it, I kept remembering this morning and all the other mornings—and all the other nights. And it all made a pattern that proved I was wrong."

"Delly—"

"Your toughness isn't just in your words, McGafferty. It goes right into the core of you and turns you to iron. I saw your grin this morning when we walked down Pelott Street. Yes, tears in my eyes and a grin on your face! I remembered the grin you wore when I met you on the Shanto, and all the other times and all the other grins. It hasn't changed and you haven't changed. But I have. It took four years, but I have. And the fast way's the best." She stood up and checked his instinctive move with a shake of her head. "Alone. Like I said. So long, McGafferty!"

She looked back once as she reached the door. He sat unmoving in the shabby old jacket, with his rough red head bent and his eyes on the lobster laden table—with his big bony hands clenched at the edge of the snowy cloth and the smiles and stares of the crowded room falling over him.

The whole world hates you!

IT CAME at three minutes to four—fifty-five minutes after the belly broke out of Section Three. The break was clean now. The mill was gone. The other two buildings were shattered piles, still undozed. The hoses played up and down the torn grasses and the sun-scorched earth. The smoke was visible in the air in stringy thin streamers, and breathing was torture. Then the sky lit up to the northeast, burning away the gray smog blanket, and the holocaust was on them.

It came like a molten sheet from the Gut—a whitish, orange liquid pouring out of the sky. Riding a hundred and fifty feet high in the air—cushioned on a rolling ground wave of fumes—fed by the gases in the tars and the resins of the pines underneath, and sucked by the natural draft of the valley. The hosemen dropped their nozzles and fled. The crowd on the hillside cringed back from the incredible blast of heat that stung against their eyeballs. The fiery wave took ten full seconds from its burst through the smog to the mouth of the Gut. The leading white ripples lowered and bent down into their own towering blossoms of smoke. The Pottsville Creek boiled a moment, and was blotted out. A low orange wave poured over and flowed up the slight hill, sustained by, and devouring the superheated topsoil as it came.

Adele covered her face with her hands. "My God! He was right!"

McGafferty's voice could be heard roaring coarsely. "Pressure on the siding pumps! Get out of town, all that's going!"

Adele shrank back to the edge of the station, stumbling backwards to the far end of

the platform. She crouched down on the hot, rough boards, dimly aware of Fletcher beside her—of the opening roar of the odd car and truck. She saw the hoses come writhing alive, and the long shaggy streams turn into steam where the fire fed over the dynamited wreckage across the street. McGafferty and Lumbow were on one of the nozzles, backing doggedly. The red Jeep came again, and he yelled for two of the others. They replaced them on the bucking nozzle and then the low wave surged up and the first standing building turned red and burst into light. McGafferty's arm jerked and the Jeep driver backed in a spinning lurch. He saw her then, and his arm jerked again.

"Delly, you fool! Get out!" His rough hands were on her. On her and on Fletcher, pushing them savagely forward. They stumbled away from him, past the slowly backing Jeep man who was shielding his face in the crook of his arm, and watching over his sleeve for McGafferty's signals.

There were two open lots and two buildings together to the end of the block. And McGafferty changed his strategy. The hoses swept back and began washing the blistering face of the station behind them. The Jeep swung in to the second house from the corner, and McGafferty and Lumbow threw themselves on the cases. The door burst open under their shoulders, and Lumbow came out alone. Three more of the crew passed the dynamite in, and the Jeep roared away again.

They lay on a lawn across the corner, with their heads close to the ground and the air coming easier. Fletcher coughed and grunted beside her.

"You gotta hand it to him, Delly. He knows his stuff."

"I'm handing it to him, but I don't get it."

"Easy! It's not a forest fire any more. It's a straight town blaze. The impetus is gone. No gas. Just straight combustibles. If he keeps it from jumping the street to the station, and cuts it off at this corner, he's got it."

"But the dynamite—they haven't got time."

"Two empty lots to slow it down," he coughed again. "McGafferty's counting on that."

The Jeep was back, circling at the corner, and the second door went down under their shoulders. Five of them rushed to the cases, and then they shrank back as the loaded building beside them flared into light. McGafferty's voice was a savage roar. His arm was a bludgeoning piston as he drove them away. The crew turned and ran, dragging the hoses back, and Lumbow dropped down on the lawn beside them.

"McGafferty!" she sank her fingers in Lumbow's arm. "Don't let him stay there!"

"It's all his show now!" Lumbow choked. "When one dead man's better than four, you don't cross McGafferty!"

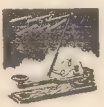
They watched him dash from the open doorway to the back of the Jeep and back, a case of powder under each arm. Three times, he made the run, and then the Jeep was empty and the doorway was empty and McGafferty was somewhere in the smoking building, huddled blindly over an open case, fumbling with his detonators. And ten yards away, the heat and the fire moved lower and closer to another pile of cases.

Fletcher was cursing softly and monotonously, and Lumbow's big hands were hooked and tearing in the grassroots.

"Come on, McGafferty! Come on, McGafferty . . . any minute . . . any minute . . . the detonators. . . ."

He came out of the doorway, bent low and running . . . his arms shielding his head and his eyes streaming. Lumbow reared up and caught his arm and the four of them fled around the corner of an empty house. There was a double blast behind them . . . one shock blending into the other, and flaming debris rained and clattered into the mouth of the lane. Lumbow looked out and grinned and was gone. And McGafferty nodded, and gasped back his breath.

"We got her," he said simply. "The hoses can handle her now."



THE switcher was back on the S.&D. siding and the women and children surged into the street. The men turned from their silent perusal of the charred sodden stubs that had been a village block and sought out their families. Smoke still oozed from a dozen black heaps, and the air stank with the sharp, sour smell of wet wood ashes. But the hoses were coiled and gone, and McGafferty's crews were loading their Jeeps. McGafferty stood in the center of the road, his shoulders bent with weariness

and his hands shoved deep in his pockets. People pushed by him, staring bitterly and coldly, or not looking at all, and he seemed not to see them.

"So long, McGafferty—till the next time we meet."

"Yeah." He raised his head slowly. "Till the next time—wherever that is. Give them a good story, Delly."

She saw him take a step and stop. She saw his bloodshot eyes lift, and become seemingly aware of the people around him for the first time. He looked back at her, and his lips twisted in a short, bitter laugh.

"Never thought of it before. Kids waiting for their maws. Women waiting for their men. Nothing like trouble to tie them all together." The bitter laugh came again. "Nobody ever waits for McGafferty." He was gone then, with his, "So long, Delly."

She saw him cross over and stop by a flaxen haired girl in ragged blue overalls, who was being hoisted up into the arms of her father. She saw his hand come out of his pocket, and words being spoken, and then he was gone again. She crossed over.

"What was that?" She saw the ten dollar bill in the boy's fingers.

"He said—he said to get a new doll carriage for Babsy. He just said that and walked away."

She heard Fletcher's yell, but she didn't turn. Her eyes were glued on the bowed head and the sagging shoulders—on the bony hands jammed down in the jacket pockets. McGafferty on his way to the Piper Cub, on his way to another job of work.

Fletcher was shaking her arm. "Hey, Delly! You crazy? I've been—"

"Yes," she said softly, without turning her head. "I'm crazy. You're crazy. McGafferty's the only one who isn't crazy." She shook off his hand. "He's right and I'm wrong; and you can give that to the *Tribune* too. I'm going to be busy—"

She was running then, and the sudden tears that came into her eyes made the distant figure waver in her sight. She knew it now—she knew what she had wanted to know for a long, long time. Nobody waited for McGafferty. Nobody waited because nobody had ever seen him come out of a burning, loaded house, with the detonators heating behind him, and the smell of death in a fog around his head—nobody had ever seen what he had on his scorched and streaming face as he came—a grin! The same grin that she had misread and hated down through the years, the only mask that the mauled and battered face owned, to cover up all its feelings.

"Wait, McGafferty!" she yelled, and the figure ahead stopped and came into clearer focus. "Wait, McGafferty!" and her arms were stretched out to meet him.

"Angel Face," McGafferty grinned, "you got mud on your nose."

Her eyes were full again, but he couldn't see that. Her face was buried in his hard chest, and she was rubbing her nose against his scorched and smoky shirt.

SEA HARVEST

By John Bunker

The surging surf has a song to sing—
A song of the wind and the tide;
And the sands on which the breakers cling
Have many a wreck to hide:
Many a print of pirate feet
And many a piece of eight.

Some day I'll comb a tropic shore
On the reach of a sun-swept key
To hear the roaring, restless surf
Tell its tales to me:
Of barnacled chests with bursting bands
Hidden beneath those shifting sands.

Copyright 1937, by

"Hold it!" von Dormer croaked, crouching and shaking on the limb in frenzy. "I'm coming. . . ."

HARK, AFRICA!

By

JOEL TOWNSLEY ROGERS

IN THE early morning Nbem, the white man's drummer, removed the covering mats from his great call-drum, beneath the thatch-roofed little drum-shed at Bouboufonké. He reached in through the drum cleft and pulled forth his two sticks of heavy polished ebony. Standing meditatively a moment, like a great artist before a concert grand, Nbem surveyed with pleasure the great oval hollowed log, eleven feet long and three feet in diameter, worn and polished to an old luster by thirty years of drummings, which rested on its two sawhorses in front of him. The great call-drum of Bwamba. Nbem pushed his red fez on the back of his head and spat upon his hands. The morning was fresh and young, and he felt the creative urge within him, the urge for the making of loud and glorious sound.

An Unforgettable Jungle Novelette

Popular Publications, Inc.

Boom! he struck the great resounding wood experimentally. *Bawa!* he throbbed a double note out of it.

Then with both sticks and a play of rippling shoulder muscles beneath his faded khaki militia coat he bent to work, shattering the still, windless tropic dawn with a great cataclysm of rapid, furious notes that melted into each other like the roar of a troubled flood.

"Ob ba bawa! Pause and listen! Pause and listen, chiefs and peoples! A new commandant of the whites, a lord of lords, has come to Bouboufonké!"

With swift, powerful, yet delicately precise strokes, faster than the eye could follow, faster than the hands of any white musician, Nbem, the government drummer, beat out his rolling drum-speech on his great call-drum. Thudding along the cleft of carefully pitched gradations which extended along the wood's resounding length, striking the thicker lip of the male edge and the thinner lip of the female edge with lightning-quick precision, in a fury like a demon he thundered forth his flow of *booms* and *bawas,* of half notes and tenth notes and furtive fugitive little grace notes, in syllables as precise and articulated as the syllables of mouth-speech, till the drum was like the voice of a man shouting words to a great multitude, while the sweat poured out of him.

"To the hill people and the river people! To the bush people and the forest people! A great new white commandant, a lord of lords, has come to Bouboufonké! Come and bow your necks before him, all you peoples."

Sounding the *ndans,* the call-names of all the tribes within the district. Of the Ngumbas, of the Bulus and the Benes, of the Mpongwes, whose women are the most beautiful in Africa, beautiful even according to the white man's standards and famous in the stories of many an old colonial back in Berlin or Paris, of the Yebekolos, who once ate the man meat, of all the peoples along the upper Bom beneath the flag of France. . . . Seventeen or twenty miles away the sonorous vocables would pulse and quiver in the forest silence, till on the farthest shores of echo their last reverberation died.

The drums, the radio of Africa! Nbem, the white man's drummer, broadcasting from Bouboufonké.

"To the Bulus and the Benes! To the Yebekolos and the Mpongwes! To the dirty B'gis, the pigmies, who eat carrion and dung! This is Nbem, the son of Bwamba, who was the drummer of Hé-Do-mé! This is Nbem, the government drummer, drumming from the great French palaver house at Bouboufonké! A new commandant, a new white lord of lords! He is your father! He is your mother! He is the lord and sun above you! He is the great and famous chieftain who has been sent to rule over you by the lord of all in the land of Paris, to decree the law, to sit in judgment over your lawsuits and disputes, to collect your taxes, to reward the virtuous and punish evil-doers! He is a famous warrior! He is a high-born king's son! He is a man stronger than an elephant and more beautiful than a bull rhinoceros! He is an illustrious Frenchman, fearless in battle, with great horns of hair upon his lip like the horns of a wild bush cow and devil-devil eyes more terrible than the glass eye of Hé De-mé the Crocodile! His name is Me-laygou the magnificent! Come and make obeisance to him! Bring your troubles for his judgment! Bring your money troubles and your woman troubles! Bring your cattle troubles and your goat troubles! Bring your witchcraft troubles and your mother-in-law troubles! Call to palaver! To all peoples! The great new white commandant at Bouboufonké!"

Nbem rested on his sticks a moment, sweating.

"This is Nbem, the son of Bwamba!" he began again. *"This is Nbem, the son of Bwamba, who was the drummer of Hé Domé, drumming on the great call-drum of Bwamba! Pause and listen! A new commandant! Bring your gift offerings to seek his favor! Bring your chickens and your peanuts! Bring your vegetables and melons! Bring your wives and fairest daughtres! The white man is great and powerful! He is rich and he is generous! Fortunate the man who pleases him and wins his favor!"*

NBEM paused again a moment to scratch his stomach with one of his sticks. The new *résident-administrateur* — Monsieur Milegout, his name was—had arrived by wheel-litter from Toucou, at the end of automobile transportation forty-seven miles

down the Bom, in the late middle of the night, only a few hours ago, with his porters and the guard of black militiamen who had taken the body of his predecessor down last month and had waited around Toucou to escort him back.

He had had twenty steady hours of being bumped and jolted over the jungle trails, and it was possible, it was in fact extremely likely, that he was still asleep. But that did not bother Nbem. Any man who does not thrill to the boom of the great call-drum, awake or asleep, alive or dead, has no soul. And if he stays in West Africa long enough, it might be added, where the drums are always talking, eventually he will have no mind, either. So he might as well get used to it. No drummer so magnificent as Nbem, the son of Bwamba. No drum so great and thunderous and mighty as the great call-drum of Bwamba, who had been the drummer of Hé Do-mé, the great and cruel Crocodile.

There was a strange deafness about the ears of most whites, of course, which made them unable to understand the language of the talking drums, even though it might be tapped out in their presence as simply and slowly as to a baby. It was like the incredible insensitivity of the pinched nostrils of their pink bony noses, which made them unable to distinguish the difference in the individual odors that men have, so that they couldn't tell who a man was by his smell at all, but only by looking at him. Those were peculiarities not explainable, just something that had been left out of them, like monkeys which cannot count above three, though men can count to ten.

In all other ways, however, the whites were like the other men, and even though the new white lord could not understand drum-speech, still he must be admiring the magnificence and splendor of Nbem's drumming in his dreams.

Nbem's nostrils sniffed as he scratched his stomach for the moment. The smell of cooking, of pheasants' eggs frying in Karite butter, of brewing coffee, of dumboy sizzling in palm oil, of baking hot cassava bread to be eaten with tinned butter and coconut jelly, drifted pleasantly to his nose from the kitchen of the administration house. The white lord's breakfast was already being prepared for him against the time when he should awaken, even if that might not be for hours, lest he should wake up suddenly and have to endure twenty minutes of waiting hunger.

That had been the custom for twenty years or more, ever since the days of Hé

Do-mé the Crocodile, who otherwise might have been put in an enraged mood, starting the day off roaring around and mercilessly punishing with whip and boot.

The new French lord was—so Nbem had surmised from the awe-struck look which he had got of him upon his arrival in the night—the new lord was a good sleeper and a good eater, it could be guessed. Which showed that he was a profoundly wise man, with an understanding of the important things of life and what it was all about.

Nbem's naked breech-clouted legs did a little shuffling dance. He tossed his sticks up into the air and caught them whirling. He cut a buck and wing. With a great boom he thudded down on his resounding drum, speaking to a thousand square miles of forest, bush, hill, clearings, villages and trails.

"Bring," he boomed, *"your youngest wives and loveliest daughters! Bring your concubines and female ouolosos! The white man is brave and handsome! He is rich and he is generous! He wears shoes, he sleeps in a golden bed, he eats chop three times a day! He has come alone to Bouboufonké! He is here without a woman! Fortunate the man who has one to offer on whom the great white lord's eye might light with satisfaction! Fortunate above all other women in the world the one who pleases the great white lord, whom he takes beneath his roof to make his bed, to do his washing and his mending, to soothe his headaches and nurse his fevers, to eat at his table with him, after the white man's custom with their women! Ab ba alu! Ba ba balu! The white man eats!"* boomed Nbem.

"Pause and listen! A new commandant, a great white lord of lords at Bouboufonké!"

The Bulus heard him, and the Benes heard him. The Yebekolos, the Ngumbas and the Mpongwes heard him. In their hidden villages in the forest the timid little B'gis heard him, sitting huddled, pot-bellied around their small dawn fires. A great booming through the jungle. A great new white commandant! Nbem, the white man's drummer, broadcasting from Bouboufonké.

FAINT and intermittent, at the end of miles of distance, von Dormer heard it in the forest where he lay, the great booming drum. For the moment it brought the gooseflesh to his spine and a shivering to his heart. At first, before he had got the beat of it, he thought that it might be some message about him and, warily, rolling his red-rimmed eyes, he listened. But he was nothing, he was not even a hunted man any more; he was forgotten, and Bwamba's drum, the great drum at Bouboufonké, would not throb out its messages for him or about him any more in honor or in anger, in fear or glory, whether he was alive or rotting in the jungle. . . .

In his darkened bedroom in the administration house, beneath the mosquito netting on the great gilded wooden bed with its scroll-work filigree and its double-headed eagles in bas-relief, Commandant Louis-Philippe de Milegout, the subject of all that exaltation, slept on.

The booming of the drum did not disturb him, for he was somewhat deaf, and it came to him only like the podding of peas through the shutters of his windows which had been closed against the light and heat to come. Then, too, he was utterly exhausted, in every bone and pound of blubber, from his long and arduous ride in the jolting litter. His bald head shone with sweat, his lips bubbled softly with his breathing. Except for his thick glossy brown mustaches, which lay spread out beneath his whistling nose like a pair of misplaced buffalo horns, their waxed points encased in tight little paper curls for the night, his expression was like that of a baby, and in his dreams he smiled. Perhaps the smell of breakfast cooking drifted to his nostrils and mingled pleasantly with his dreams. Or perhaps somehow in his subconscious mind, in the magical intuition and clairvoyance of sleep, he interpreted and understood the booming *bawa* of the drum. Or perhaps he just smiled because of a large healthy digestion and the gladness of being who he was.

He was Louis-Philippe de Milegout, the sole lord, in the name of the Republic of France, of all the district of the Upper Bom within the Cameroons. The sole law and the sole judge, tax assessor, chief of police, president of the board of aldermen and chairman of the waterworks, over a hundred and twenty thousand blacks, of whom approximately half were female. Greater and more absolute in his own sphere than any European dictator. He

didn't even have to wake up until he wanted to. It would be enough to make any man smile contentedly while he snored on a golden bed. Monsieur de Milegout had never been in Africa before. He didn't know the things that might get a man, even a great and absolute French commandant, and so had nothing to worry him.

For a moment, though, his eyelids opened.

"Mon Commandant!" said the black militiaman who stood erect and motionless, in fez and khaki coat, with naked legs, at the foot of his bed. *"Mon commandant!* You are my father and my mother! Are you sleeping well?"

"Very well," said Louis-Philippe. "Who are you?"

"Mon Commandant, I am Ougoulou, the brother of Nbem, your drummer, the sergeant of your guard. I am always with you, lord, to watch over you and guard you even at the cost of my own life."

"That's very nice. What is that drumming I hear?" said Louis-Philippe sleepily.

"Lord, it is the great call-drum of my father Bwamba, who was the greatest drummer in all Africa and was the drummer of the Germans at the time of the great war between the whites. It is telling the greatness of your lordship to all the jungle."

"How can it do that?" yawned Louis-Philippe, who did not understand drum-speech.

"It is true that even it is inadequate," said Ougoulou respectfully. "It is endeavoring, however, to make an approximation. And your lordship is sleeping well?"

"Very well, indeed," repeated Louis-Philippe. "I never slept on a bed half so comfortable. Where did it come from, anyway?"

"Mon Commandant, it was the great golden bed of Hé Do-mé, the great and terrible German lord who once ruled over half the Cameroons, in the time before the great war between the whites. Sixteen porters it took, working in relays and sweating heavily, to bring it far through the jungle."

"The Germans make the best beds that I have ever known," yawned Louis-Philippe contentedly, still nine-tenths asleep. "I was in command of one of their villages in the occupied zone after the war, with some Senegalese like you, Ougoulou. I ought to know. Much obliged to the Boche for having left it. We owe them a lot." He blinked his eyes, for the moment a little more awake. "Hé Do-mé?" he said. "Was that the Boche's name? I've heard something about him. He never left the Cameroons, I understand, and used to cause disturbances at some other stations. If he ever shows his face here, instruct your men to give him the whip, Sergeant. I won't take anything from a Boche. That is, if he's still alive."

"Hé Do-mé is only a ghost, lord," said Ougoulou with white eyes. "A hungry ghost. He will never show his face here. He is afraid of the great drum of Bwamba. That is why," he muttered beneath his breath, rolling his eyes in the darkness, "that is why you will find Nbem beating it so frequently."

"What did you say the drum is beating for, again?"

"It is telling your lordship's greatness to the whole world," reiterated Ougoulou. "It is summoning the people of all the tribes to palaver, to make obeisance to you, my *Commandant.* For you are lord of all within the villages, within the bush and jungle."

Boom! beat the great call-drum, in the early dawn.

"This is Nbem, the Yebekolo!" Nbem beat with a great thundering. *"This is Nbem, the son of Bwamba, who was the drummer of the Germans! Drumming you a mighty drum-speech now about the great new French commandant! Where are they gone now, the old Germans? Where are they gone, the cruel masters? They are fled beyond the sea! They are dead within the forest! Long ago the vultures have torn the hearts from them! Long ago the bug-a-bugs, the army ants, have picked and cleaned them! Long ago the phosphorescence, the green ghost light, has played on their moldering bones! They are ghosts now, all of them! The great French lords sleep on the beds they had, the great French lords eat the food they had, the glory of the great French lords is the theme that I, Nbem the drummer, drum upon the great call-drum that once beat for the glory of Hé Do-mé the Crocodile, whom Bwamba followed to the forest. Ba ba ma toe! Cross his hands on his breast!"*

For the moment Nbem's sweating face

was working as he thudded on the drum with savagery.

"This is Nbem, the son of Bwamba, who knew all devil-devil secrets and the mysteries of the Other World, for whom the great ghost drum beat the death cry! Drumming on the drum of Bwamba the glory of the French. Pause and listen! A new commandant. . . ."

Ob ba bawa! the great drum notes went thudding in the early morning, traveling a mile in five seconds, echoing, echoing, the great booms and little quavers. And some of them would go winging almost two minutes through the air before their last quaver died.

"Pause and listen! Pause and listen!"

Through the jungle far away.

THE hunting screams of the leopards, the throb of the night dance drums from lost and lonely little villages or from the Devil Bush, had died away with the end of the black African night. Promptly at half past four the pepper-birds, the alarm clocks of the equatorial forest, had burst forth on all sides with their maniacal din of raucous screeching, from every bush and tree. They, and the brief torrential deluge which had come bucketing down with the first grayness, had put on end to von Dormer's fitful, nightmare-riddled sleep, though not to the hunger of his liver.

Shivering, rubbing his red eyes, scratching his matted hair and beard with claw-like hands, von Dormer sat huddled in the crotch of the great tortured baobab tree which extended out over the rushing little jungle stream, twenty feet above the ground. Like a tall, emaciated, pallid ape he squatted on his hunkers miserably, while the leaves of the forest drubbed above him with the bulleting drops and the rain sluiced down his naked backbone from the tree bole.

In a few minutes the cloudburst had passed and the slathers of water ceased. Von Dormer closed his eyes again. He had had a dream of some endless banquet he had been attending, in a clawhammer coat and white tie, with medals on his chest and a red ribbon across his starched shirt bosom —a banquet beginning with platters of rich hors d'oeuvres, though unfortunately he had been confused trying to remember which were the proper knife and fork to use, so that the dishes had been removed before he could start eating. He tried to sleep again now to recapture the dream, this time to grab with both hands and stuff and gorge himself before they were whisked from him. But he was cold and wet to the marrow of his bones, and the worms of hunger gnawed at his guts.

He could not escape the ravening of reality. He opened his red eyes, remembering where he was and why he was here. The night was over. The look of things was taking shape. Suddenly fully conscious and alert, von Dormer began inching his gaunt frame slowly and carefully, on hands and knees, with endless crafty patience, out on the huge horizontal tree limb to one side of him which extended out over the rushing jungle water.

High up above the roof of the forest the clear early morning light that the blacks called the Bath of the Monkeys filled the sky now. The depths of the jungle were still shadowy all around, a place of somber browns and grays, but a few streaks of light filtered down through the heavy and still dripping foliage here and there, tracing mottled and deceptive patterns on the ground below and amidst the branches of the great tree. Twenty feet out on the limb of the giant baobab, von Dormer paused suddenly in his slow, crafty creep and lay stretched out as still as stone. Speckled shadows moved around him with the filtering light, but he did not move at all. With red, unwinking eyes he watched the ribbon of mottled shadows which lay looped at the end of the bough in front of him, six feet beyond his head.

Some suggestion of a movement in the snake's quiet, sleek coils amidst the leaves had caught his watchful eye. A sluggish rippling, a slow stirring in its thick powerful muscles beneath its velvet hide, where it lay camouflaged amidst the speckled shadows.

The screeching of birds had stopped when the rain crashed. There was no scream or cry or furtive, half-glimpsed movement of any other kind of life now in the great quiet jungle. A stillness like eternity had fallen for the moment on the whole world. The minutes passed, and shadows played upon the thick mottled ribbon at the bough's end in front of him. But whether it was

awake or not, and watching him, von Dormer was not sure.

A light footfall broke the inaudible silence presently. The underbrush on the ground below stirred in a moment more. A brown girl stepped softly and lightly out upon the edge of the jungle stream, from off some nearby trail. As wild as a doe, and as silent. Von Dormer wet his lips, waiting till she should go away.

Her black hair rippled. Her hide was pale as coffee with milk. She was clad in a leaf apron and a string of beads about her supple loins. On a flat wet stone at the edge of the water she paused, beneath the great twisted baobab tree, unaware of him on the bough above. Poised on one foot, she tested the coolness of the rushing, rain-swollen brown current tentatively, preparatory to crossing it or bathing herself in it, it seemed.

Shadows played upon her amber shoulders. She moved so quietly, like a figure on a silent screen. And presently she would go on, and vanish as she had come. Yet for an instant she lifted her great dark shining eyes, her smooth young dusky face. Swaying softly, she seemed to be listening to the vast pulsing silence of the jungle, as if straining to catch something in it, an inaudible music in the air.

"*Aie-o!*" her voice rose, softly and eerily and singing to herself. "Hé Do-mé has gone over the mountains!"

She began to swing her hips, her back and shoulders quivering, stepping softly and lightly on the rock.

"*Aie-o!*" she sang softly and wildly in the silence, keeping time with the swaying of her body and the steping of her feet. "*My mother had a white lover, she followed him afar! He had a sword and a glass eye, he was the chief of war! He took the Bata men by surprise, the Island men he slew like flies! Hé Do-mé has gone over the mountains, and with him we must go! Aie-o! Hé Do-mé the Crocodile is marching again! Hé Do-mé!*"

Her body twisted, her light feet stepped. At first slowly, then faster and faster, weaving and swaying, wild and eerie, with a beat of inaudible tomtoms, so it seemed, in the padding of her naked feet.

With a last leap and shout, she sprang into the air. For a moment she posed on her toes like a victorious tribal wrestler, which is to say much like a white ballet dancer, also, with arms outstretched and head bowed down, as if acknowledging inaudible shouts of applause and triumph. Then she tossed back her hair and her great shining eyes laughed. With a shriek of giddy, hilarious African joy she stepped down into the water.

THE windless air of the forest had began to pulse with a far off, intangible beat. Some remote drum. There was always some drum talking. *Ob . . . ob . . . ob . . . ob . . .* the throb of it no louder than a spider's footfall on a leaf, from the ultimate limits of sound, while the brown girl splashed and von Dormer lay motionless as death on the limb of the great tree.

Faint and intermittent, at the end of miles of distance. But in a moment, as it grew louder, von Dormer recognized the deep, vibrant, sensual throb. Each drum has its own voice. It was the government drum, the great drum at Bouboufonké. The old talking wood of Bwamba, the best along the Upper Bom, if not in all the Cameroons.

It had been years since von Dormer had been in this part of the jungle, within sound of the great drum. How loud it had once beat for him, and furiously, while he lay hidden, with silent laughter. Years ago, when he had been young and strong, when guns and war walked in the jungle, when life had been a breathless game.

But the wars were long over, and he was a hunted man no more, and the great drum of Bwamba would not beat again for him, in fear or glory. The little drums, yes. The little frightened drums of lost and lonely villages might beat when he came too near. But not again the great government drum at Bouboufonké.

"*To the Ngumbas!*" beat the drum. "*To the Bulus and the Benes! To the Yebekolos and the Mpongwes! To the B'gis, the litttle people, who hide humbly in the forest! A great new French commandant, a lord of lords, has come to Bouboufonké!*"

The throb of it had been for a long minute only the shadow of a sound. But now for the moment the surge of it arose in volume, as somewhere in the intervening distance a slow wind shifted, bringing it nearer.

For a minute the air pulsed, the tree leaves seemed to tremble. The boom came

like a waterfall. The drummer was laying it on furiously. He must be working off ten pounds of blubber. Clinging to the smooth bark of the great limb with cold-ribbed, shivering flesh, von Dormer twisted his lips beneath his matted beard and cursed silently. With red eyes he watched the stirring ribbon on the bough's end in front of him, with silent, silent cursing.

He had not moved, he had hardly let his heart beat for fifteen minutes. The snake at the bough's end had been disturbed by the voice and active movements of the girl below, and had begun to stir with a vague, irritated restlessness for a moment. It had been annoyed further by the podding vibration of the drum.

For the moment, at the height of the beat, its head had risen, and it had begun to sway. But now it had subsided and was lying motionless once more, in a seeming state of lethargy and quiesence, and it had not become aware of him, von Dormer dared to hope.

It would remain comatose now, since it had stirred no further, through any lesser sound and quieter movement which he might make. Von Dormer lifted his head carefully, an inch at a time, from his flat limb-hugging position. A spotted gecko, one of the small amiable sucker-footed lizards which swarmed everywhere in the Cameroons, ran giddily and brainlessly down an interlacing branch above the mottled snake, while von Dormer watched. It sprang down onto the limb below, and darted across the motionless velvet body of the reptile like a rabbit across a log, and apparently with no more notice taken of it than a log might.

Von Dormer exhaled a silent breath. Shivering in every bone, inching his gaunt knees with care and laying aside intervening leaves and twigs with crafty patience, he resumed his stalking creep out the limb towards it.

CHAPTER 2

THE snake was a young python, about four feet long, plump and healthy, and full of good solid meat—the best meat in the jungle, firm white, and sweet as pork. Clutching in one hand the rattan noose that he had made, Von Dormer continued out along the limb towards it, gaunt, matted, with burning eyes.

Only four feet from it now, almost within reach of one of his long skeleton arms, if he stretched out to seize it. Its beady lidless gaze was motionless, blind. Like velvet it lay amidst the speckled leaves, its body smooth and strong. It was young, but there was plenty of fight in it. Its head could hit like a sledge-hammer; its jaw was punishing and strong. Von Dormer lifted his noose carefully and measured for the cast as he inched along, with his shaking body tensed and his breath tightened against the quick desperate struggle ahead of him the instant he got the loop over.

Inching. Crafty. Suddenly now—Oh, *Krieg in Heligoland!*

It had been too much to hope that he might creep upon the mottled ribbon inert and unaware. The thudding of the damned call-drum had disturbed it too much, as well as that amber young wench below singing, weaving, splashing, slapping, and yelling.

A ripple passed through the python's velvet trunk in the camouflaging shadows where it lay. It rippled, and suddenly it slid like water, as von Dormer, with a desperate croak erupting from his throat and one arm flung around his head to shield his face, hurled himself the last three feet along the limb, casting his noose furiously and frantically at its slick, swift-streaking head.

"Damn you, wait a minute!" he croaked furiously, in German, Bantu, French pidgin and Cape Dutch.

But the python had not waited. The thick foliage at the limb's end stirred, and that was all. Von Dormer was left alone.

Below him the water splashed and the girl screamed. With red eyes, shivering from exhaustion and spent tension, von Dormer crouched a moment on the great bough, staring down through the speckled foliage that still stirred and quivered with the snake's drop.

"Ha! Ha!" he breathed in spasms.

The python had landed on her shoulders as she splashed and waded in the waist-deep water, knocking her from her feet. Convulsively it had coiled its thick constricting body about her neck. Her scream of mortal terror was stifled out of her. For

the moment her flailing arms, with frantic and swiftly weakening gestures, beat the water into foam. Threshing, suffocating, amidst the spume and welter of the brown flood she turned up her suffused face and livid lips, no cry left in her, with her eyes like death from the middle of that mottled, terrible collar about her breast and throat.

The current was carrying her rolling, suddenly inert form along in the clutch of the knotting serpent, her head below the surface.

"Hold it!" von Dormer croaked, crouching and shaking on the limb in an insane frenzy. "I'm coming!"

The drop to the opaque, rock-strewn water was too far for him to risk. Bubbling at the lips and shaking with a palsy of weakness, giddiness, and crazed excitement, he went scrabbling and lurching on all fours back along the great limb.

"Hold it!" he croaked and gibbered. "Grab it by the neck and hold it! *Bijang abwi!* Good meat!"

Clawing and tearing, he swung himself down the rattans of the tree trunk with spasmodic jerking grips, landing with a staggering drop on the ground at the foot. He started down along the tangled bank beside the rushing current with sprawling, lopsided leaps, his bony legs shaking beneath him, staggering like a peg-legged man on his stiff old-broken knee. His gaunt skeletal frame was burning and shaking all over with the fever of the hunger-kill. It seemed to him that he could tear that snake to pieces with his hands and gulp it raw if he got hold of it. Python! Python!

"Hold it! Get it by the neck! It can't hurt you!" he was croaking and gibbering.

But the python had loosed its spasmodic coil about the girl before von Dormer was abreast upon the bank. It slid from her with a swift muscular threshing. Down the stream amidst the swift, swollen current it went away like a twisting arrow, vanished in the brown flood thirty feet farther on, around a bend of rock.

Von Dormer croaked. A tree root on the bank tripped him. He was near collapse with weakness and despair.

Cursing, he stumbled a stride into the water, towards where the girl rolled and floated in middle stream, pale-lipped and spewing water, her face barely afloat, her breast heaving, her dark eyes still glazed.

"Get up! You aren't drowned, you fool!"

His red gaze on her was baleful. If she hadn't struggled so wildly and desperately, the bewildered python, clutching her by instinct, might not have loosed its hold till von Dormer could have seized it. If she hadn't appeared on the scene at all, it might not have been disturbed in the first place and he could have snared it in the tree where he was stalking it. Von Dormer was shaking as he waded out. He would grab her, anyway, if she wasn't dying, and make her lead him to her village. She was young and healthy; she was probably worth something to them. With her as pawn and hostage they wouldn't just vanish into the forest, taking all their food and animals with them, as they usually did when he approached, damn their dirty stinking hides.

"Get up, Nyissa, wife of Ze Zaikut!" he said with a hoarse croak of triumph, recognizing who she was.

With sudden augmented effort he surged towards her.

"Get up, Nyissa," he croaked crooningly, *"moné zip!* Come here, I'll take you home. Wait a minute, you brown, slippery fool—"

But there was no laying hands on the girl. Her glazed eyes had focused on him in wordless terror as he came splashing through the stream, on his gaunt dead-white frame like a skin-covered skeleton and his red and glaring eyes. With a gasp and a frantic threshing, agile as a fish, she swirled and got her feet beneath her on the stream's bed. Swiftly and frantically she splashed towards the opposite shore, leaping like a deer with rippling muscles, wasting no time in empty screaming, but filled with the terror of the wild.

Von Dormer croaked a futile oath. He stopped and staggered in the whirling current. He was weak and shaking all over, a doddering, toothless lion. She was too young and lithe and quick; he could never catch her. The very current was too strong for his thin, stringy legs. Swaying, snarling, he watched her vanish into the trees on the farther bank, swift as a shadow, still staring back at him with her great eyes in transfixed terror over her shoulder.

That finished it. She would raise the alarm about him in no time, swiftly running. Their damned drums would be beating presently.

Unseen faces peering. Silence. Stealth. He knew it. Their little frightened drums beating in the forest.

"Hé Do-mé! Hé Do-mé!" they would be warning. *"Hé Do-mé with the glass eye! The hungry ghost of Hé Do-mé the Great Crocodile is near within the forest!"*

So the little frightened drums would beat.

VON DORMER floundered back onto the bank behind him. He had remembered who the brown girl must be when he had started towards her, suddenly. She must be the one that he had heard the drums speak of as Nyissa, *moné zip*, the gazelle of the forest, the wife of old Ze Zaikut, the pigmy king. Old Ze Zaikut had bought her when she had been no more than four years old, or maybe two—twelve or eighteen years ago, sometime after the war. He had paid a high price for her, too, the wealth of his whole village in elephant tusks, gold and copper ornaments. He had drained his people dry and loaded them with debt for a generation, for her mother had been a Mpongwe woman, and one of the most beautiful. It was not often that the submerged and humble little B'gis had an opportunity to get hold of one like her.

A high price, a high price, considering her state of infancy and the risk of total loss by smallpox, snake bite, or any other of the hazards of jungle living before she developed to be of any value. But she had turned out a good investment. She had grown up to be what she was, Nyissa the dancer, famous and sought after at all the dances and plumed-warrior meetings of the jungle tribes, the darling of the little people. Often far off von Dormer had heard the little drums speak of her. Because of her old Ze Zaikut and his tribe had honor among their kind.

Nyissa the dancer, the gazelle of the forest. In Europe, thought von Dormer, she would be worth now a hundred times, a thousand times or more, what old Ze Zaikut had paid for her, in white man's money. In almost any white man's money. At some night club or in some music show with her wild supple dancing, her wild eerie voice.

The waste of life!

Wrinkled old Ze Zaikut, the toothless, pot-bellied little pigmy king. Ze Zaikut must be almost a hundred years old now, if he was still alive. An old buck to be mate of the gazelle of the forest. Perhaps, though, old Ze was dead, and von Dormer had missed the mourning drums about him. If so, she would have passed on to one of his sons or great-grandsons. But still the glory and treasure of her village. She had walked into his hands, almost, thought van Dormer with a spasm of bitter futility. If he had only realized a little sooner who she was, if he had only had the speed of limb and the strength of arm to catch and hold her, she would easily have been worth the price of a kid or even a heifer from the B'gis.

He had forgotten that the pigmy village was so near, in its lost and forgotten jungle clearing, a place that not all men knew, nor the hidden trails to it. Yet he still remembered them. Even in the blackness of the darkest night he could still remember them, a trail once taken. But it would do him no good to make for the B'gi village now, without her as a hostage, for he would find the huts vacant when he reached there—the banked fires still burning in the clay ovens, the smell of meat and baking cassava roots in the air, but the pots empty, the last bunch of plantains taken from the rafters, the last goat and kid and dog driven into hiding. He would be left with no more satisfaction than to smash their ovens and burn their thatches and fill his belly full of air. Stealth and silence! Hidden little faces. And around him while he raved and destroyed, the little frightened drums would beat, but there would be no one to be seen.

Or perhaps they would have left poisoned meat behind for him to feed on.

The B'gis were noted for their hospitality. The Benes and the Bulus were noted for their hospitality. The Yebekolos, the Ngumbas, and the Mpongwes were all noted for their hospitality. To all strangers in the forest. To all who came sitting on their mats silently requesting with the glances of their eyes that their hunger be appeased. The best of whatever they had it was their eager pride to supply to the stranger in abundance, according to the guest-law. And if they had no best to offer, if the fare was meager, then they were ashamed. But not to him, Hé Do-mé, the Great Crocodile. He had eaten up his welcome with them too long, too long ago. He was a ghost.

Von Dormer collapsed cross-legged on the bank of the jungle stream, hugging his gaunt abdomen. His burning eyeballs throbbed. His head felt light and giddy. He pulled at a bunch of coarse grass and stuffed it into his mouth. But his tortured intestines twisted inside him and his throat rejected it. Heavily he fumbled in a pocket of the moldering rags about his loins and pulled forth his monocle reposing there. He wiped it carefully on a corner of fabric and screwed it into his eye, sitting surveying the problem of existence, which is very problematical to a naked man in the jungle.

He might as well face the facts. In a few hours, he thought, he would probably die. Perhaps just sitting here. Scraps of the dream he had had in his miserable sleep floated before his vision, though his eyes were open. Shadows of a great banquet, and endless meats which faded away before him.

The world swarm before him. Yes, today he had come to the end of his hunger, and he would probably die.

"Ob ba bawa!"

The call-drum note was podding again. Not the great remote drum of Bwamba now, nor even the ghost of Bwamba's drum, which sometimes still, they said, beat in the jungle when a man died. Some other drum, some smaller but much nearer drum, perhaps from old Ze Zaikut's own hidden little B'gi village not far away, had picked up and was rebroadcasting on its own small one-horse station the sonorous message of the great government drum at Bouboufonké.

"Pause and listen! A new commandant! A new commandant of the French at Bouboufonké. . . ."

"Verdamnis!" breathed von Dormer. "Chuck it!"

But they had to reiterate the whole damned thing by rote, in their solemn monkey way.

"He is great and he is mighty! He is rich and he is handsome! He is famous and he is fearless. . . ."

ANOTHER little squirt Frog civil-administrator at Bouboufonké. Paugh! They didn't last forever at any of the back country stations, these cream-puff Frogs, too far away from their aperitifs and their restaurant terraces and their Mimis and their Fou-fous and all their pretty little comforts. But there had been a time when a new commandant at any of the more remote and lonesome little up-country stations could be counted on, as a matter of course, for a couple of days at the very least of free food, bed, liquor, and bad cigarettes.

"He eats from plates!" the drum podded. *"He has chop three times a day!"*

Von Dormer had never been back to Bouboufonké. Bwamba's old tribe of Yebekolos lived thereabouts, and Sasa's Mpongwe village was only a few miles down the river from it. There might be localities less filled with hate and terror, if that was possible, for Hé Do-mé the Great Crocodile.

How many years ago had it been since he had been Hauptmann von Dormer there, beneath the black-crossed battle banner of Germany? No flag in the whole world so great and victorious. Nowhere else was it saluted with such fervor and terror, twice a day at its hoisting and its hauling down, as by the blacks of Bouboufonké. No man so mighty and so terrible as von Dormer *das Krokodil,* the Crocodile!

With hobnailed boots, with a leather quirt looped to his wrist whose leaded cat-o'-nine could strip the flesh off a man's back and guns at both hips, and blood and murder in his fists, and his hard lean smile! He had known how to handle blacks, perhaps too well. And yet with all of that he had built up a strange fanatic loyalty in some of them, his fighting Yebekolos, so that they had gone to death for him when war came, and to worse things, poor wailing fools.

"Hé Do-mé has gone over the mountains, and with him we must go! Aie-o. . . ." They had even made a song about him during that terrible time in the jungle and the mountains, and the black and brown girls sang it now who did not know that he was still alive. To whom he was only a dim off tribal god and legend. Dancing the warm love dance, the lure dance, the dance of steaming Guinea, to the bloody marching song of his starving women and his dying Yebekolos.

Ha!

He had been something once.

It would not be pleasant to go back there now, where he had been so great, to beg

starving and naked from a damned civil-service Frog. It might, in fact, be death, if the blacks had guts enough. Yet the jungle was terrible and lean, and if a man did not eat, and eat soon, he would just keel over. And when the life had gone from him he would lie here dead and rotting, with no drum to beat the mourning cry, unless the ghost drum of Bwamba.

He would like to lay his head down now. Flashes of things. The time of war. The mountains. Fleeing and hiding, hunted like a dog. The drums, the great drum at Bouboufonké booming, the drums beating all around. Sasa's smooth young brown body, old Bwamba's wrinkled, leering face. The caves beneath the rocks where they had made their last stand, the drip of water from which they had drunk, the roaring of the Frogs and Cape British outside who had left their dead within, and dared not come in after them like men. Wood-smoke, shadows. Sasa's smooth young body growing gaunter. The wailing of the other woman when they had cast the dice, what had her name been? The white eyes of the men. Old Bwamba had been the last of them to die, old Bwamba had been damned tough.

Shadows. . . .

Something rustled in the bush. Von Dormer jerked his head up. He would have to get on his feet again, and keep on them.

A new Frog at Bouboufonké was bound to be good for one replete and gorging meal, anyway, if he was halfway human. And if his black men slipped some poison in it, it would still be food. It was better to die full than to die empty, better to die beneath a roof, in the companionship of men, than alone in the rotting jungle.

VON DORMER arose on unsteady legs. He brushed his matted hair and smoothed his beard with an instinctive hand. Carefully he straightened the knot of an invisible white tie, and smoothed down the tails of an invisible clawhammer coat. The stream beside him flowed down to the Bom, and the Bom down to the French station at Bouboufonké. With his monocle in his eye, clutching invisible gloves and walking stick, von Dormer proceeded elegantly down along the wild jungle margin of the rushing stream, gaunt, torn, matted, and except for the mildewed rags about his loins as naked as Adam, with the air of a well-known man about town strolling down some fashionable boulevard, ready to lift his silk hat to the ladies of his acquaintance if he saw any, en route toward some grand and elaborate banquet to which he had been invited.

"Good day, good day!" he muttered, scratching himself under the armpits.

"He is rich and he is generous! He is a lord's son, strong and handsome!" the little nearby drum was still industriously podding. *"He is beautiful as the sun! There is none like him! Me-lay-gou his name is, lord of lords, says Nbem the drummer drumming on the great call-drum of Bwamba, who once was the drummer of Hé Domé. . . ."*

Presently von Dormer struck the faint and hidden trail used by the little jungle people. There was a footfall light as silk which had preceded him along it, he saw, toward Bouboufonké.

CHAPTER 3

COMMANDANT Louis-Philippe de Milegout, the sole lord, in the name of the Republic of France, of all the district of the Upper Bom within the Cameroons, was probably the ugliest Frenchman who had ever been invented, which is saying a good deal.

He was also probably, of all Frenchmen who have ever been invented, the most passionately devoted to *l'amour,* which is saying almost as much.

L'amour, or the love, is, as everybody knows, the consuming attraction toward persons of the opposite sex which burns in many men, particularly Frenchmen, particularly fat pear-faced Frenchmen with handlebar mustaches, ape-furred bodies, hairy moles on the end of their bulbous purple noses, bald heads, and the tic, and which is even more important to them than the appetites for meat and drink, although those latter are by no means to be ignored.

Louis-Philippe was a Frenchman, and he loved the ladies. In his dreams and from afar he had loved them since he was thirteen years old, for thirty years, as only an ugly man can love.

Fifty million Frenchwomen might be wrong, but fifty million Frenchwomen had

never liked the looks of Louis-Philippe de Milegout, not even one of them. And as a consequence Louis-Philippe, like many another man who feels vast but unsuccessful yearnings towards *l'amour*, had as time passed increasingly emphasized, in all his talk and acts, an outward air of utter indifference and contempt for women and all their ways.

Such a pretense of indifference and acting of contempt didn't naturally, change Louis-Philippe's innate fondness of the species in the slightest—and the one brief period when he had been popular and admired by them, and even jealously fought over by them, remained in his memory still, after more than fifteen years, as the one bright and glorious spot in his otherwise dull and monotonous existence.

It had been after the great war, when as a sergeant in the French quartermaster corps he had been in command for five months of a small German Village, Schleesdorf, in the occupied Rhineland, with a platoon of twenty-four Senegalese under him. War exhaustion and the sickness of defeat had beaten down the German spirit, while the sheer starvation which had gripped them made dogs of even the proudest men and the loveliest women of them.

Being in command of what food supplies there were, with the sole and final and unappealable authority to say to whom they should be issued and on what terms, Louis-Philippe had been a very great and important and much-besought man, indeed. He had had the power of life and death, the power to say who might survive and who must starve.

He had lived in a requisitioned castle of eighteen bedrooms, with a wine cellar that fifty blonde and desperate and stiffly smiling women could never drink quite dry. He had rolled and lorded, he had swelled and swaggered; when he had scowled, the men all trembled, when he snapped his fingers, the women danced. Or if they didn't, they lived to regret it. He might have been court-martialed and sent to prison for fifty years for some of the things that he had got away with, no doubt, if his superiors had learned about them. But who was going to report him?

It had been a very fine time for Quartermaster Sergeant Louis-Philippe de Milegout, and it was a pity that it couldn't have gone on forever. But like all good things, even the best bottle of liquor or the most marvelous dream, it had come to an end, and all too soon.

The armies of France had been called back to France, and Louis-Philippe had taken off his all-conquering horizon-blue uniform to sink back to his previous obscure and unimportant level, like thousands of other quartermaster heroes throughout the world, in a life of drab reality—in his case, to resume his position as a forty-dollar-a-month copy-clerk in the French Colonial Administration, Department of Supplies and Accounts, Bureau of Maintenance and Equipment, Division of Tools and Small Gear Purchasing, Classification of Screws and Fishhooks.

And there, filing correspondence on screws and fishhooks, adding endless columns of figures on screws and fishhooks, analyzing, sampling, comparing and tasting screws and fishhooks, living and breathing screws and fishhooks, Assistant Sub-clerk Louis-Philippe de Milegout had remained for seventeen years and seven months of his priceless life, growing no wealthier as he grew older, growing no handsomer, no more distinguished, no more appetizing to the mind or eye—growing, in fact, even fatter and more cockeyed, even hairier, and more waddling-legged, even more shunned and distasteful and abhorred in his obscure and unappealing poverty to the lovely ladies of France.

The ladies of foreign parts! They were different, it seemed to him. For years they had melted in his dreams, humble, supplicating, and responsive. Therefore he had breathlessly sought and eagerly obtained the post of *résident-administrateur* at Bouboufonké when he had learned that the previous incumbent had died with unexpected dispatch and that there was no other man available at the moment to replace him.

"It's a dull place, Milegout," the chief of personnel had told him, staring at him curiously. "It pays only eight hundred francs a month, which is less than you get here. It's the sort of place for a young romantic fool who doesn't know yet what it's all about, and who might as well learn the hard way. After all, you've cut your milk teeth. I don't see why you want it. I might as well be frank with you, the last

three residents we've had there have come out in a box. The damned drums beat all the time till they wear your skull away and your brains are naked and raw.

"It's really quite tame, of course; there's no danger of any kind if you don't walk into a crock's mouth or try to play skip-rope with a mamba, or get the blackwater or be bitten by a tsetse. The natives are quite peaceable and law-abiding. They make good soldiers when there is a white man to lead them and make them fight, because they are so docile. But they aren't warriors on their own account.

"Most of the troubles that come up you handle at mammy-palaver, pidgin for domestic relations court—the blacks are always getting into disputes about their women. Some of the women of the Mpongwes are really lovely. If you were a younger man that might be an inducement. Sorry! Just my joke, Milegout, I remember your principles. You don't go in for them, do you? You're above that sort of thing. Well, you can have it if you want it, Milegout. I don't mean to talk you out of it. We're too hard up for a candidate. A *résident-administrateur* is supposed to be a gentleman, but in this case it probably doesn't make any particular difference. Good luck! Oh, one thing more. If you happen to run into von Dormer in your territory, watch out for him, that's all. He's a damned human ape, a renegade, crazy and not to be trusted. Even the natives don't have anything to do with him."

"Who's von Dormer, sir?"

"HALS VON DORMER, Cap van Dormer. The Crocodile, they called him. German commandant at Bouboufonké at the time of the war. He gave us a hell of a fight." The grizzled colonial smiled reminiscently. "Us and the British and the Portuguese and the Cape Dutch," he said. "Von Dormer, was he a headache! He fought us in the forest and he fought us in the swamps. He ambushed us from the treetops, and sneaked past our sentries to carve us in the night. We had him outnumbered, though, forty to one, and we kept pushing him back, him and his blacks and his few whites, with their women.

"We took his villages one by one, cut him off from his supplies, and he was finally licked. He led the remanants of them in a desperate starvation march over the mountains to reach neutral territory in Spanish Guinea, and those who didn't die along the way made it finally. But von Dormer himself didn't cross the frontier. With a half a dozen of his most faithful blacks and his favorite woman Sasa, and perhaps one or two women more, he turned off at the last minute to hide out in the mountains, with the idea of continuing a private war on us of his own.

"His faithful man was Bwamba, who had the reputation among the blacks of being considerable of a devil priest. Sasa was Bwamba's wife, which was an added bond of devotion which the black man felt towards von Dormer, too. Von Dormer probably counted on the fear the blacks had of him to feel him and help him hide between his forays on our posts. But most of the tribes had come over to us—the African always likes a winner—and instead of helping hide him they helped us close in. With the drums booming on all sides of him, we were after him in no time. Soon we were following him with forced marches night and day through the mountains, letting him break the way for us and giving him no chance to rest. And though Bwamba was shifty and von Dormer was a hellion and crafty and strong, we overtook them finally and got them cornered in a system of caves in the rocks.

"We thought we had them then, they were played out and pretty weak, and they had exhausted their last food supplies several days before, so far as we knew. But they still had plenty of rifle ammunition left, as we found out when we tried to go after them. We couldn't send the black boys. They wouldn't have minded shooting Bwamba in the daylight, if a white man told them to, but they were afraid of him in the darkness of the caves, and they would rather be shot than go. We had to go in ourselves, and when we did, why, there were plenty of young Cape farmers and boys from Marseilles and Yorkshire and Lisbon who took lead in their hearts or had their guts ripped open in the narrow black twists and corridors. My God, the bangs and yells! We were slipping in our own blood and jamed with our own dead.

"We got out of there, taking our wounded

and dead with us—there was one of them we never did get out, he lies buried under stone there still in the mountains. There were a couple of hundred whites of us, and a thousand or more blacks, and only that one German hellion and four or five blacks with him at the most, but there was nothing we could do.

"We tried smoke, of course, but the caves were too deep, and there were too many air vents and cracks. We gave it up, mounted squads with machine guns at every possible exit, and sat back on our heels to wait for our field pieces to come up.

"We camped there a month. Some way they must have got hold of a little something to eat—perhaps they caught spiders or bats for a while and made some messes out of them—for we smelled wood smoke and saw the seep of it drifting through the cracks in the rocks now and again in the days that followed.

"How they held out, though, on what they could find in those caves, God knows. Yet two or three of them were still alive after three weeks, for when we tried to go in after them, again, having seen no sign of anything for days, again the rifles spoke. But we knew they were dying. Then one night after weeks we heard Bwamba beating on his drum from the cave, telling us he was dead. We knew he was the toughest of the blacks, and would be the last to go.

"THEY talk on their drums, somehow, you know," the grizzled old chief explained with a wry face. "It all sounds pretty much alike to me, but even I got the beat of it that night. It was drumming *ba ba ma toe!* That's the death call of the Yebekolos. It's something that gives you the creeps, even in ordinary circumstances, when you can see the dead man sitting up, all decked out in his finery and grinning, and the funeral drums beating around him are more like a friendly farewell. *Ba ba ma toe!* Cross his hands on his breast! And the *ndan,* the call-name, of old Bwamba.

"The blacks all knew that it was Bwamba's own great call-drum, too. They recognized the tone of it. It scared them out of their wits. They deserted by the hundreds that night, simply ran in panic, with that ghost drum hounding them through the forest, till some of them fell down dead. A ghost sound, I say, because there was no drum they could have had with them in the cave, and the drum of Bwamba was still back at Bouboufonké, a hundred and fifty miles away, where our own drummers had been drumming it plenty in the hunt for von Dormer. By God, I don't explain it. But old Bwamba drummed out his own death cry on a ghost drum, and the blacks ran, and that was that.

"You've got," explained the grizzled old colonial a little hastily, "you've got to simply ignore the whole question of black magic in Africa, I might say, Milegout. You are, unfortunately for yourself, a dull, thick-headed—I mean to say a practical and firm-minded fellow, I can see. In the same circumstances you might not have even heard the drum. Perhaps it was just mass hypnotism. Perhaps there was no sound at all.

"But five or six days later we heard it again, *ba ba ma toe!,* with the *ndan* of Sasa this time. Sasa the Mpongwe, the woman von Dormer had liked best. And somehow you knew that there was only von Dormer left in the blackness, and the drum seemed waiting for him. It still raises the hair on my head. Well, the next day our field pieces came up, and we blew the rock to hell at point-blank range. We smashed it to flinders and to dynamiting dust, and we went in. We kicked and poked and jabbed our bayonets around, and we found the torn and mangled body of Sasa beneath the rock chunks and the skulls and bones of those who had died before. But we never found hair nor hide of von Dormer. One of the honeycombing exits must have been left unguarded the night before when the black men ran yelling again from the ghost drum, and he got away.

"He never was caught, either, during two years more of war, though for months every night the drums would be podding from some village here or there, reporting him seen in the neighborhood, and we would send out squads to run themselves bow-legged in pursuit. And even a year or so later we would have the drums booming about him now and again. But alone in the jungle, just one man, he could hide in a bush or tree, and he never left a trail that we could pick up any more than a monkey. He had ceased to bother us, any-

way, no doubt because by that time the problem of sheer survival had become the all-consuming one with him, and after a while we ceased to bother about him, either.

"After the war von Dormer began by degrees to reappear, tentatively—trying us out, you might say. We began to get reports of him here and there, at some black village or white logging camp, and presently he was even showing up at our stations in the back country, when he found that we didn't want him any more, cadging what he could as a free guest on the strength of being a former German officer and a gentleman. We made various offers to repatriate him if he wanted to go, but he had been in the Cameroons since nineteen hundred seven, and there was nothing to take him back to a jobless and starving Germany. He wasn't a criminal, of course, and by the terms of the peace treaty we couldn't deport him merely as a former enemy, so long as he didn't notoriously and flagrantly break any of the few laws there are for a white man.

"Poor devil! I remember seeing him soon after the war, when he had come out of hiding. He had aged twenty years in two, they tell me, shrunk down from two hundred and forty pounds of solid iron flesh to a hundred and thirty or so, a bag of bones, all shot to hell, rotting away inside him he looked, a horrible living skeleton. He had got hold of a little cache of elephant tusks and a few native baubles in copper and gold at that time—best not to ask how or where, at least no native caravan was ever reported ambushed and murdered—and he was looking for a purchaser. He sold them to a Ngumba trader for twelve English pounds, which was about one fourth of what they were worth. That's been more than eighteen years ago, and he's been in the Cameroons ever since. Hell knows how he's lived. He smells, and he's probably crazy, and he's a damned white native. I had finally to start warning all new men we were sending out against him, like you. Still in some ways," said the grizzled old colonial grimly, "I feel sorry for him. He put up a good fight. He never surrendered."

"VON DORMER isn't going to get anything out of me, sir," Louis-Philippe de Milegout had promised the personnel chief, curling his mustaches ferociously. "You think of me as only a sub-clerk of screws and fishhooks, *M'sieu 'le Colonel,* bent over a dull task day by day. But I, too, have been a soldier, with a brilliant war record, though it is not I who should mention it. There is nothing I will take from a Boche. I spit!" said Monsieur Milegout, drooling. "I spit upon the Boches!"

He wiped his dribbling chin.

"Screws and fishhooks," murmured the grizzled old warrior meditatively.

"Monsieur?"

"I was just thinking that you have been pretty faithful, Milegout, I have seen you here for years, and I never even knew your name before today. You have been faithful, Milegout," he repeated, "and I am glad to give you the opportunity for wider spheres of activity in the service of France, if it is what you want. I am still a little curious, however, frankly," he admitted, staring at Louis-Philippe still speculatively, "as to what you expect to get out of it."

For the moment Louis-Philippe's pear-shaped face had grown somewhat mottled. He looked across his mole-tipped nose to right and left, whuffling a little with his lips without saying anything.

"If you must know, sir," he said, pulling at his mustaches, "I am by hobby and inclinations a—uh—gourmet, for my amusement. A humble one, but a keen one. I have tasted all the dishes of Paris, and in my day, the Rhine. I should like to taste the curious dishes of Africa. Someday I expect to write a book."

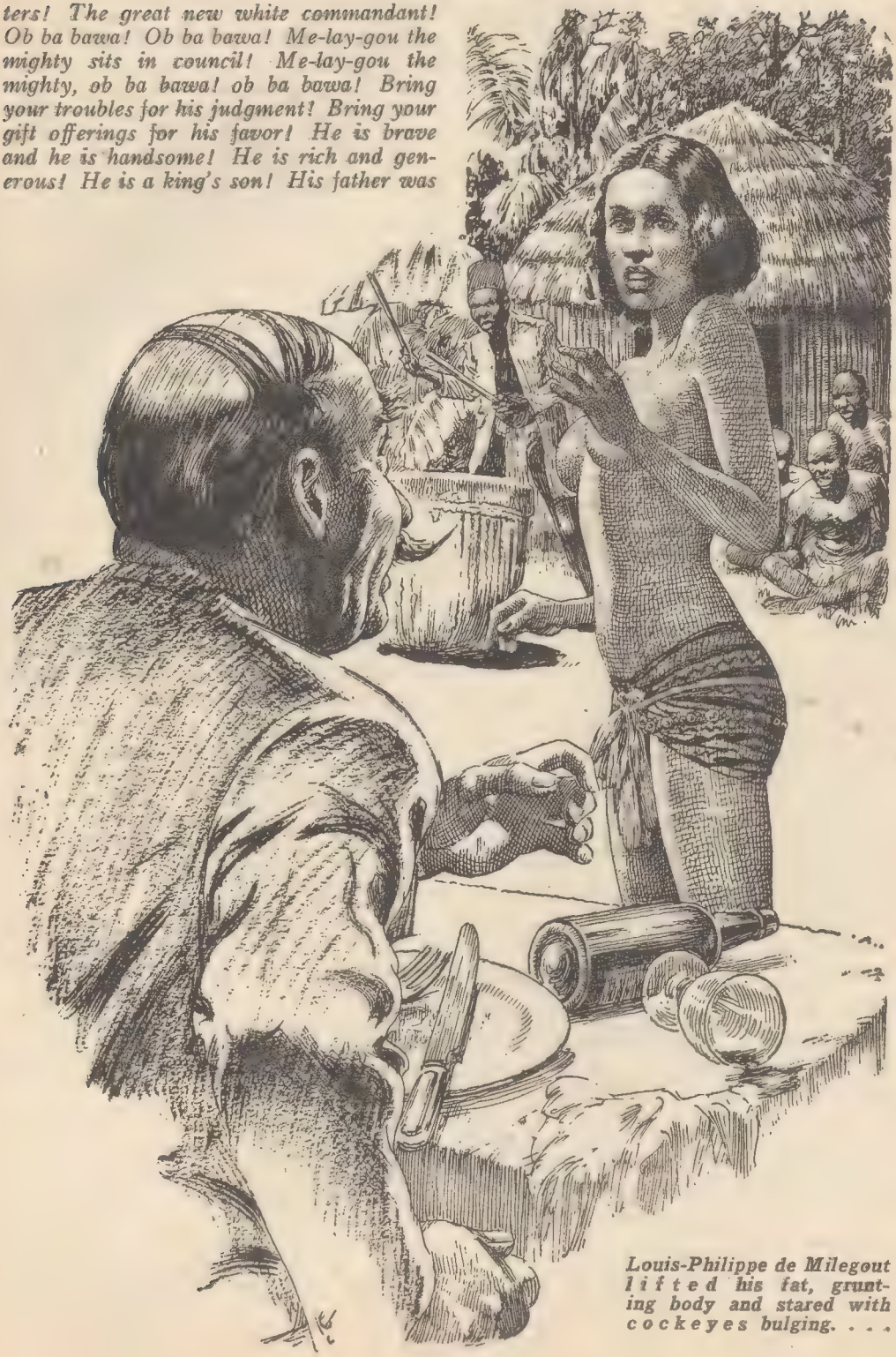
"Um! A gourmet?" his chief had said. "A gourmand, anyway, no doubt. Yes, you rather give one that impression. Well, some of the dishes of Africa are worth looking into. That may be a worthy effort, Milegout. Good luck to you. I hope you get material for your book. Screws!" he had muttered beneath his breath, to M. Milegout's departing back. "Screws and fishhooks!"

CHAPTER 4

FIFTY yards across the clearing from Milegout, beneath the drum-shed Nbem the drummer beat upon the great polished hollowed log with a resounding cadence.

"Bring your wives and loveliest daugh-

ters! The great new white commandant! Ob ba bawa! Ob ba bawa! Me-lay-gou the mighty sits in council! Me-lay-gou the mighty, ob ba bawa! ob ba bawa! Bring your troubles for his judgment! Bring your gift offerings for his favor! He is brave and he is handsome! He is rich and generous! He is a king's son! His father was



Louis-Philippe de Milegout lifted his fat, grunting body and stared with cockeyes bulging. . . .

all white! His mother became white, too, when she married him! He owns cattle and goats by the thousands on the hills of Paris where he came from! His name is known as far as the sun shines! Fortunate the man who wins his favor! Fortunate above all other women in the world the one who pleases the great white lord any more. Ab-ba alu! balu! balu! Me-lay-gou the mighty at Bouboufonké, lord of lords!"

Louis-Philippe de Milegout, sitting back relaxed and contentedly, with his hands folded on his fat stomach, surveying the circle of shining black faces and bright eyes and the smooth lines of the glistening oiled black bodies crouched around the rim of the clearing with sultanlike deliberation and complacence, sitting there so royally at the very summit of his greatness, at the very apogee of his life, at the very apotheosis of his fat bloated soul, suddenly had his complacence and repose and fat anticipatory contentment shattered, and shattered utterly.

Louis-Philippe de Milegout clutched suddenly the arms of his chair. He lifted his fat grunting body half an inch with strained intensity. With cockeyes bulging he stared for a moment motionless across the sunlit clearing in the direction of the drum shed, beside which a slender brown girl had appeared like a shadow out of the edge of the jungle, wild and wary as a doe, standing one-footed and lightly, looking at him with a kind of strange wild ecstasy in her great liquid eyes.

Shadows played upon her supple body. Her posture was all grace and charm, and delicacy and the swift dancing fleeting beauty of life, and shadowy dreams of an intangible ecstasy. At the edges of the great jungle. In that instant like a dream. And Louis-Philippe de Milegout, staring across at her, frozen motionless at the first glimpse, knew why he had come to Africa, knew why he had ever been born. And in the depths of his ignoble little soul there stirred in that instant a spark, a tiny fire of immortality, an understanding of the strange things of beauty and loveliness and the ungraspable evanescence of life which are beyond all desire. And the prayers of artists and the hope of saints.

He had never seen a one like her in all of Paris, along all the Rhine, nor had any man, nor would, so simple, so supple, so full of natural forest grace, so delicate and so wild, standing with her great eyes in awe upon him at the edge of the Eden jungle. And for a moment a spark was in the soul of Louis-Philippe, a knowledge of the things of music and beauty which no hand of man can ever seize, and better that they never try. The spark was in him, but it died, smothered in his rolls of fat, in the greediness of his soul. He had half started to get himself to his feet, as even a man who is not a gentleman does by instinct when he sees something beautiful and delicate and rare, such as he has never seen before, and worthy of a spontaneous tribute and attention. But he sank back again, well-filled, arrogant, gross and heavy. He was Milegout of Bouboufonké. He was lord. He snapped his fingers at her. His face twisted up in a hideous grin.

"Moné zip!" thundered Nbem upon his great call-drum, in an ecstatic frenzy. *"Her name is Nyissa, moné zip! The gazelle of the forests!"*

The sun baked. The wind was still. No breath blew from the hot glassy river. Insects swooned and died upon the wing in the air that was like a furnace.

Stepping softly out of the forest, wary as a doe, and pausing with one foot lifted, with the rapt light of the inspired and maniac dancer in her eyes. Her shoulders stirred, her hands moved softly to her breast, she quivered slowly from the hips. There was a frenzy in her, the frenzy of the dance.

Nbem felt the demon heat run through his own blood instantly in response to her muted frenzy. The demon heat, the glory of the dance, the wild hot blood of Africa!

"Boom!" he struck the great deep shivering note. *"Boom! Boom! Boom! Glory! And glory forever! She has come, the gazelle of the forest!"*

The heat was in his blood. *"Yi-o! Yi-o!"* he yelled. His flailing arms beat down with glorious fury. *"She is the gazelle of the forest! She is the daughter of Sasa, loveliest of the Mpongwes! She is Nyissa of the lost and hidden places! Rarely do we glimpse her for a moment, ranging far in our hunting, fleeting lightly where only the wild antelope flies and the shadowy, timid monkeys cry! But much we have heard of her, and much we have longed to see her,*

and much we have beat our drums in invitation to her in vain! Glory to moné zip, the gazelle of the forest! The glory of the little people, the gazelle of the forest!"

Nbem's head was almost jerking off his shoulders as he flailed with frenzy on the drum; his fez had gone off flying. The sweat rolled out of his fat hide, his white eyes glared, his thick lips foamed; he did the leopard walk, crouching, slipping, twitching, pausing, stalking down along the drum towards her while he beat forth his exaltation on it, the thunderous *bawa* of his sticks rolling forth in a cataclysm of pauseless liquid sound.

And with a final boom and a great yell Nbem leaped into the air. He threw his drum sticks from him. He caught down his carved bullshead dance drum from beneath the rafters of the drum shed.

"Yi-o!" he yelled. *"Dance, dance! Glory and glory forever! Dancing and glory forever! Dance, gazelle of the forest!"*

And whirling, spinning with the madness in him, he collapsed crosslegged on the ground, with the dance drum clasped upright between his knees. In a frenzy, with glaring eyes and yelling mouth he drubbed both fists with rhythmic booms upon the stretched rhinocerous hide—a drum less wide in range and less vocable than the great call-drum, but more primitive and sensuous, and in its range as deep.

THE beat of the dance drum thundered. She quivered from the hips. Her eyes were remote before her, they were maniac and wild. There was the frenzy in her, the frenzy of the dance. The beat grew wilder, her lips were parted—they made a little gasping sound. And suddenly she stamped down her foot.

"Aie-o!" her wild voice rose exultantly. "Aie-o!"

"Malinga! Malinga!" the blacks were all yelling. "Malinga, gazelle of the forest!"

With gestures soft and shy she stepped out from the shadows, her demon-haunted stare upon the great white commandant, her knees quivering softly, one hand upon her breast. Her light feet moved at first slow, and then faster and faster, while her wild voice rose up in the wild song. She was tossing her hair, she wove like water, she spun in the center of the hot sunlit ground. The tomtom boomed, the blacks clapped their hands in breathless sweating silence now, while in the center of the sunlight she tossed and spun, lithe and barbaric, yet strangely virginal, in a dance that had in it all the ungraspable longings of men's lives, the despair or artists and the futility of saints.

"Aie-o!" she sang, advancing towards the *nkalabande* beneath whose shadows de Milegout sat mute and sweating, with his fists locked on his chair arms and his eyes like marbles in his head.

"Aie-o!" she sang, provocative, alluring, her black hair tossing. "My father was a white man, my mother fair and brown! They were hungry in the forest, the men were falling down! *Aie-o!* Hé Do-mé has gone over the mountains, and with him we must go! Hé Do-mé is marching on! Hé Do-mé!"

Advancing, retreating, spinning, advancing again.

"Aie-o! There's no black man who would have me, I am too wild and young! I dance within the shadows, the jungle trees among!"

The rhinoceros hide beneath Nbem's fists roared and boomed, the squatting blacks around the circle of the clearing crouched forward on their fists and knees.

"Aie-o!" the blacks all roared. "Hé Domé has gone over the mountains, and with him we must go; Hé-Do-mé the Crocodile is marching again! Hé Do-mé!"

The ripple of her amber muscles, the tossing of her hair! Her wild, wild eyes, her leaping feet. Louis-Philippe de Milegout sat gripping the arms of his chair with his fat lips drooling.

She was across the table from him, within five feet. A hideous grin, his look of allurement and irresistible enticement, spread over his pear-shaped face. He reached across the table toward her, scattering food and plates with the grunt of his surging belly.

And that tore it. At the first gesture of him she had paused instantly in her wild dance, with a gasp, as if something had snapped, as fragile as a spider thread, but as strong as steel. Wild as a doe she slid back. Shadows passed across her menaced eyes as swift as light on water. She shivered like a woman coming out of a trance.

The demon had left her. She had the

look of not quite knowing where she was. She gave a breathless gasp. Backing, she stared bewildered at M. Louis-Philippe de Milegout's glaring cock eyes, his hideous grin of jewfish allurement, his pear-shaped face with its bristling horns of mustache and the added flowerpot of waving maiden's-hair fern upon his nose, while M. de Milegout winked at her ferociously, screwing up his face again and again.

"All right!" said Milegout. "I liked your dance. *Bis! Bravo!* Come here, and I'll give you a coconut. I'm lord here."

But with another inaudible gasp and wild, wild eyes, she turned from him. She fled back across the clearing quick as a shadow. She seemed to skim in a leap the drum that Nbem was still thudding. Without a backward glance she vanished in the forest.

"Get her!" yelled Milegout, beside himself. "Get her! Make her come back! Ougoulou! Your men! Send them to catch her! By God, she won't flout me! I'll have her whipped into her senses! I'm the lord here! Go get her!"

OUGOULOU shook his black face with hopeless regret. *"Mon commandant,"* he said, "you are my father and my mother. You are a wise man beyond all utter wisdom. It is not for me, O lord, to point out to you that the rhinoceros does not catch the light and timid little golden cat far in the forest, nor yet the warthog the mocking bird in the sky!"

"Something frightened her!" said Louis-Philippe, glaring about him. "What could it have been?"

Nbem the drummer had sprung up, kicking his dance drum away. He snatched up the sticks of his great call-drum from the ground where he had hurled them.

"O, little gazelle!" Nbem played upon his drum, with a pulse deep and vibrant through the forest. *"Oh, little gazelle, you came from your far off secret places, from the home of the timid little people, to give the only gift you had, the glory of your dance, in honor of the great white commandant! In your heart you hoped that he would be pleased by it, for the honor of the little people! Do not think now that he was displeased by it! Do not fear his anger! When the great white commandant closed down one eye terribly and with deliberation at you it did not mean that he was giving you the devil-eye, on the contrary it meant that he was pleased with you, after the manner of the great white with their women! When the great white lord with look and gesture invited you, a woman, to eat at his table with him, he was not trying to force and lure you into violating any of the inviolable tabus, so that demons might seize your soul and flesh within the darkness for your sin! Strange are the ways of white men; they have not the tabus of the B'gis! Come back, come back,"* Nbem pled with vibrant drum. *"Come back, gazelle of the forest!"*

His great drum notes rolled pleadingly. Tears were pouring down Nbem's face. He knew too well now it was hopeless. How many times he had drummed for her, in vain.

"Come back, Nyissa, daughter of Sasa, best-loved wife of Bwamba! Who followed Hé Do-Mé to the forest, and for whom the great ghost drum beat! This is Nbem, the son of Bwamba by the Ngumba woman, calling on the great call-drum of Bwamba, come back, my sister, come ba—"

Nbem's rippling hands stopped in the middle of a particularly poignant and throbbing beat. He stopped abruptly. He let the great drum of Bwamba break off with a call unfinished, which was something that the great drum had never done before, for far and wide over a thousand miles of villages and forests it would bring an eerie fear and a terror of the devil-devils to the people, as to what had silenced the great drum in the middle of its talk, like a man suddenly strangled with hands about his throat. Yet Nbem broke off with the beat unfinished—he could not help it, for he felt as if hands suddenly were strangled about his own throat.

Ah!

Nbem's nostrils were quivering; a peculiar muddy color had spread over his face. His eyes rolled, and suddenly he backed out from beneath the drum-shed with a glance of breathless terror up at the great silk-cotton tree which stood at the edge of the forest, with great branches overgrowing the thatch roof. There was nothing to be seen, but Nbem's knees were quivering and the whites of his eyes were jelly, and his heart had ceased to beat. In a moment the grunt of a crocodile croaked down at

him, half mockingly, half as a man who speaks little clears his rusty throat, and through the thick foilage a pair of red-rimmed eyes, a matted lean head of blond-gray hair, a fragment of gaunt bearded face showed, peering down at him.

"*Mbolo!* Greetings, O industrious woodpecker!" croaked the rusty voice, a little weakly but with insolence. "Do not let the smell of a crocodile interrupt the woodpecker's industrious pecking. I sit on your mats, O son of Bwamba, and I listen."

"He—" jittered Nbem.

"I hunger, son of Bwamba," muttered

"O, little gazelle!" Nbem played upon his drum. "You came from your far off secret places. . . ."

the red-rimmed eyes. "I have come back, I have come back. To fill my belly. Give my obeisances to his rhinocerosship ape, and tell him that I have come to sit on his mats, a stranger from the jungle—"

But Nbem had heard, "I hunger!" and he did not stay for the rest. He had felt the flood of life and mobile terror beating through his veins again after that moment when his heart had altogether stopped. With a wild, unearthly screech, still grasping his drum sticks, he fled into the forest.

CHAPTER 5

VON DORMER eased his shaking frame carefully down onto the roof of the low shed. He slid down the thatch on his tail. He would not have been able to have climbed the silk-cotton at all, but its fork had been only a step from the ground, and it had not required many ounces of strength, of which he had few to waste. He had waited to reconnoiter, to look the old station over, and so for a little while he had lain upon the tree in watchful silence while the dance drum boomed and the brown girl danced and the roaring song of the blacks went up in honor of the great new Frog who had come to rule from the old throne of Hé Do-mé at Bouboufonké.

Bouboufonké! So this was it again.

He remembered the time when he planned to bring a wife out here, a girl who had been his childhood sweetheart back in Schleesdorf on the Rhine. He had made great preparations for her, had had a bed, bureau, an elegant shiny dining room table, and other luxuries sent from Germany and had brought in with great effort by his blacks from the coast, hacking through the jungle. He had filled her in his letters with stories of Bouboufonké, until he had come to believe in them himself, perhaps.

The war had broken out, she had not come. And perhaps just as well. She would have been disappointed. He had forgotten her name now. He had even forgotten what she had looked like. She had been white, of course—she must have been white, for she had had blue eyes and yellow hair, and she had been German, though in his mind, when he tried to conjure up the picture of what she had looked like, he could see only brown skin and negroid features. Yes, it had been just as well she had not come. It might have been she whom he would have had with him in the caves within the mountains.

Bouboufonké—he had overrated it in his own mind, he saw with condescension, as he slid carefully down the thatch. It wasn't so much as he had dreamed it. It never had been. It was a puddle fit for Frogs. But he was von Dormer; he was still the great von Dormer—only a little faint, that was all. The food had been thin, the hunting poor. He didn't move quite so fast as he used to, that was granted. They had come to know his smell. For the last few weeks, or months, or was it years, things hadn't been going quite so well. But he would let the Frenchman feed him, and when he had eaten he would be himself again.

He had been walking hours, since early morning, when beside the stream in the lost jungle he had listened to the drum-speech, and had arisen to go to Bouboufonké. Yet so long as he had been on his feet, shuffling and shuffling heel and toe, at the energy-conserving, steady pace of Africa, he had not felt too weak. There had been a momentum which had carried his stringy muscles, his starved blood, along. He had walked sixty miles within a day, he had walked perhaps a half million miles in Africa. Yet for a moment now, as his sliding feet hit the ground, and he staggered, with caving knees, von Dormer had the ghastly awful terror that he could never cross that last little distance of fifty yards or so to where the table stood.

He swayed, he staggered. Then he got his legs in movement beneath him. With his monocle in his eye von Dormer proceeded across the sun-baked clearing, counting each step.

His knees were shivering beneath him. The recurrent dream that he had had of vanishing, empty banquets still terrified him. But this was real. The smells, he knew them every one. The ample dishes, still well filled, after the Frenchman had been satisfied. Oh, God, if he died now, before he reached it! A demon in a nightmare waiting to strike him down. He walked, he walked, the long, long steps, fooling the waiting nightmare demon. Then the Frenchman was before him, standing clutching the edge of the table, the table

spread with all that food, as if in a gesture of hospitality. Von Dormer halted before the fat white bulk of the Frenchman. He had reached it.

"CAPTAIN VON DORMER, formerly of the Imperial Prussian Guards," he introduced himself with a croaking drawl, fingering his monocle. "At your service, *m'sieu' l'administrateur!* Happened to be in the vicinity, and heard you had just arrived. Thought I might drop in to wish you luck, and to offer any service. Fellow white men in the jungle, you know. Mush is thicker than blood—I mean water. Hands across the Rhine. As an old Camerooner, I'm always glad to help a new man out." He took a deep croaking breath, and his entrails screamed inside him. "Ah!" he said with an air of red-eyed casualness, as if just observing the table. "I see you have dumboy! Few cooks know how to make it really properly. Is your boy doing all right by you, commandant? Let me see."

Oh, that was a nice touch. He hadn't even expressed an appetite. He wouldn't let a Frenchman know that he was hungry. He wouldn't beg from a damned Frenchman. He wouldn't beg from God. He was just one gentleman calling on another, and expressing a friendly interest in the merits of the other's cook. Just for a sample, now, to see if it was real, before he was invited to sit down and spread his legs beneath the Frenchman's table! Fingering his monocle, von Dormer reached over casually and snatched a lump of dripping cassava with claws which in the last instant he could not help making a little ravenous and quick.

"Awk!" he breathed, with a hoarse croak of anticipation.

Monsieur Louis-Philippe de Milegout stood clutching the table edge, choked with cockeyed rage. The damned matted, naked, red-eyed living death, with his monocle and his impudence of a gentleman! Coming and snatching food with his dirty claws. Thinking he could get away with it.

"Why you damned ape!" screamed Milegout.

He struck the termbling clawlike hand that was swiftly and covertly streaking towards the other's hairy mouth. With another furious screech and yell he picked up one of the pale squashy fruits and slammed it in the dirty Boche's face. It spurted like a bag of water. With more maniac yells Milegout grabbed up handfuls of dripping buttery foods and hurled them in von Dormer's eyes and beard and hair. That brown girl who had fled so maddeningly a minute ago had crazed the honest Frenchman. Something had scared her. It could only have been this specimen hiding in the treetops. Yelling, Milegout snatched up the swimming dishes bodily and sloshed their contents wholesale at the matted, red-eyed skeleton.

"Get out!" he screamed. "Get out!"

Von Dormer staggered. With sprawling outstretched arms he tried to fend off the hurtling barrage of eggs, fruits, sauces, creams and hardtacks which came sloshing and whizzing through the air at him from the reeling hands of Milegout. For the moment he was blinded and bewildered by this munificent rain of overwhelming hospitality. He tried to lick his face, but the stuffs were running off too fast for him to get more than a taste, if that. Yelling, Milegout slopped the contents of the coffee pot, emptying the table.

"That finishes you! Get out!"

Red-eyed, von Dormer glared at the empty table. Oh, God, the nightmare dream! He couldn't believe it. With a half articulate croak and gobble, all his defenses of gentlemanliness gone by the board, and only an animal of crazed hunger for the moment, he sprawled down upon his knees. On all fours, he raked with frantic claws at the foodstuffs sloshed and scattered over the ground, mingled now with dirt, leaves, twigs, ants.

"Seize him!" screamed Milegout. "Don't let him have anything! Kick him out!"

Behind the enraged lord of Bouboufonké, Ougoulou, the Yebekolo, stood for an instant motionless with terror. But a couple of other black militiamen, of tribes which had been less close to Hé Do-mé, were on hand to grab his clawing wrists and elbows. They weren't afraid of the old Crocodile when there was another white man by, and particularly the great French lord commandant.

They hauled his bony form to his feet, holding his clenched fists which still fought crazily to reach his mouth. In their grip von Dormer stood gaunt and shaking. He had been kicked out before from other sta-

tions, but never without a full belly. Never without one bite. Oh, God, the food that had been hurled at him, the food upon the ground! Like a nightmare of the hells of Tantalus. Not one bite. He couldn't believe it.

"Pardon me," he croaked. "Pardon me. I didn't mean to force myself uninvited. It has been a little while since I have chopped, though. Perhaps I seemed too greedy. Sorry to confess it, but the fact is I'm starving. Damn it," he whispered, with a skeleton grin of despair, "I'm starving. Do you know what that means? I'm a white man. Give me food, or I'll die!"

"Die," said Milegout, still in a rage. "You'll get no food here, you living death, now or any other time, and that's final. I know all about you. Why do you think I came to Africa? To feed the scullions of the jungle? Die and rot. You would smell as sweet. Die right now, if you want to."

Not that he was necessarily a totally unfeeling man, Louis-Philippe de Milegout; he was not quite inhuman. But he had his own hunger and his own starvation, and that is all that any man can think of. The long, long years! Then that moment of swirling splendor, at the apogee of life, with that amber girl dancing like a flame before him, when he had felt himself a god, an all-devouring god, reaching out to seize her. And all of it abruptly torn to tatters. This skeleton death, this specimen!

"Damn you," he said with crying rage, "if she hadn't smelled you in the treetops, she wouldn't have been scared away! Even the blacks don't like the smell of you. Rot and starve, that's nothing to me. Only keep away from here. I'm not going to have you frightening off my natives. What do you think I came to Africa for, to meet a dirty white man? Paris is full of white men. Why did you have to come along and ruin it?"

Von Dormer glared at him with burning eyes.

"Oh," he sneered, "so that's the way of it."

"What way?" said Milegout, with bubbling lips.

"The brown wench," sneered von Dormer gauntly. "You want her, do you, Frenchman?" He laughed with a hoarse croak. "I had almost forgotten that men want them. Feed me, Frenchman, and you can have her."

"What do you mean?" bubbled Milegout.

He regretted that he had betrayed, in his rage, the madness that the brown forest dancer had aroused in him. He was indifferent to the woman, lock, stock, and barrel, as anybody knew. He would not have them laughing through the jungle. Laughing that Milegout, the great white lord of lords, had been flouted by a dancing brown wench. He was a stern, silent man.

"Feed me, Frenchman," said von Dormer, with burning eyes. "I have been too long hungry. It has been too long since I have had even ants to eat, and they set up a poison in the gut. I have been too long hungry, and I know hunger when I see it. The brown girl isn't hard to reach. She belongs to old Ze Zaikut's village. No one knows the way there better than I. Even in the blackest of the deepest night, once, I found it! Feed me, and I will lead you to the B'gi village, I swear it."

Louis-Philippe curled the points of his mustache coldly.

"As it happens," he said with an aloof and formal air, "I had already planned a small tour of the villages in that direction, to get acquainted with the people. I won't feed you, von Dormer, I don't trust you that far. But if you should happen to go along with me on such a tour of the native villages," he suggested indirectly, looking down with both eyes contemplatively at the mole on the end of his nose, "and if we should happen on her village to which you know the way, I would doubtless see to it that you would be included in any hospitality offered us by the natives, if it is a fact that you really are hungry."

Food, food! Von Dormer closed his eyes a moment. But if he died right there, he would die empty.

"You are tough, aren't you, Frenchman?" he said. "I pity the worms that you tread on. But even more I pity the worms that try to eat you when you die."

DIE! Well, it had never occurred to Louis-Philippe de Milegout that he would ever really do anything like that. But in the blackness of the impenetrable night, in the great demon-haunted jungle, the fear of death had come upon him, with the throb of the little drums podding all around, podding from nowhere in the blackness.

Louis-Philippe had come to Africa to live, and not to die. But other men had done that, too, and still other men had died in Africa.

Pod, pod, pod, pod, throbbed the little drums! Hush! the darkness pressed in, rustling. Great trees whose trunks they went scraping past, from whose hanging limbs snakes suddenlly whipped and lashed across a man's face till he could scream with terror, till he remembered they were only vines.

Seated in the jolting litter, Louis-Philippe bumped, swayed, jolted, bounced, and jiggled. The skeleton form of von Dormer walked ahead and Ougoulou, the glint of his rifle on his back, carried a light. There were three or four other militiamen somewhere in the rear, perhaps only a couple of yards behind, perhaps a quarter mile, perhaps nowhere, if they had suddenly and silently been cut off. Pod, pod, pod, pod, the little drums, and the blackness was alive with something, but what it was Milegout did not know.

He held his great cavalry saber athwart his fat thighs. He had his pistol in his hand, gripping it unsteadily, with wavering muzzle swaying from one side to the other against the walls of blackness. He had a bottle of cognac clasped between his legs upon the seat, its cork drawn. With each jounce the liquor sloshed. With each jounce Louis-Philippe grabbed the bottle and took a jiggling sip of it.

The blackness had fallen with instant speed. The great black night of Africa. Even Ougoulou and the other blacks did not know where they were any more, Milegout knew. That gaunt living skeleton was supposed to be leading them along some faint trail upon the forest floor. But whether he was not lost, too, was a question. Milegout took another swig of his bottle. He wished he had fed the Boche before they started. The fellow was dying on his feet. It would be pretty if he died now, and left them in the midst of this.

Pod, pod, pod, pod! What were they saying in the darkness?

Just before the swift darkness crashed, twenty miles out of Bouboufonké, Milegout had called a rest, for his liver by that time had become considerably green and moldy tasting inside him. But when they stopped, and the black boys had steadied him while he dismounted, and they had all thrown themselves down, he had looked ahead and seen von Dormer still continuing his shuffling, shuffling, heel and toe walk, going on without them. At that forward-leaning, barely lifted pace of his, like a perpetual stagger. They had already left the marked trails, and so they had had to get up and hurry after him, lest they lose him from sight in a moment more.

"What's the matter with you, you bearded ape?" Milegout had yelled when with sweating effort they had overtaken him. "I called a halt! You can stand a rest."

"They'll come and get you while you're still alive," Milegout heard him muttering incoherently in reply, over his shoulder. "You've got to keep on your feet, or you're done for. You've got to keep moving till you have a roof over your head and a meal to fill your belly. If you don't you'll just fall down and die empty and alone. You've got to keep moving till you get to Bouboufonké. The new Frog there ought to be good for one meal, anyway."

"What are you talking about, you specimen?"

"We're marching over the mountains!" von Dormer had croaked. "Come on, get your legs beneath you before I give you the whip! You've got an empty gut, have you? I'll fill it with lead! Come on, we're marching another twenty miles tonight! And you women can wail and you men can die, but we're going over the mountains."

Croaking and muttering to himself for a long time, walking heel and toe behind the gaunt, matted skeleton, Ougoulou had rolled his white eyes around at Milegout in the rolling litter. But after the darkness came, von Dormer had fallen silent.

Now the blackness of the starless African night, of the jungle, had crashed down, and for endless minutes, perhaps hours, perhaps years and years, the thickness of it, the rustles, the whipping sudden snakes of it, had been all around them. And now the drums were podding.

Pod, pod, pod, pod! With shaking hands Milegout lifted the bottle again and sloshed a burning gill down his esophagus.

"Listen!" he barked. "Listen, what are they saying?"

But the black men fore and aft in the shafts, pulling and pushing his rhinocerine

hide, were sweating too much to answer him, if they knew. The terror grew in Milegout. Little steps, little peering eyes, little poisoned blow-guns all around in the blackness! You could feel them! The Boche was leading them into ambush! It was a trick to get them all killed.

"Halt!" roared Milegout, with the liquor reeling in him. "Squads about face! The enemy are upon us! It is an ambush! Give them a volley like soldiers!"

He waved his gun, which unfortunately he had forgot to load before departing from Bouboufonké. Breathing hoarsely, he tried to pull out his saber from its sheath, but the ancient blade was rusted in. "About face! To the rear, advance," he boiled. But the black men were used to drunken commandants, and they understood that in that condition great white lords were not to be taken seriously, or else they'd get their pants kicked off them in the morning. Cackling and laughing among themselves with barnyard hilarity, they pushed on after Ougoulou and that gaunt pale zombie of a Boche.

The drums had ceased now. The black silence pressed around. And Milegout knew terror. Suddenly with no word of warning his jolting litter stopped. Milegout heard his own whooling breath like the whooling of the hippopotamus to her child. Von Dormer had abruptly halted in front of him. His men had stopped so quickly he had been almost catapulted out. The darkness breathed. The darkness was alive with unseen little eyes. Stealth! Silence. The little frightened eyes!

Von Dormer took the light from Ougoulou, and held it up.

"Me-lay-gout the great white lord sits on your mats, O little people!" he croaked. "Beat the drum and bake the kid! Let the feast be heaped up and women dancing! Me-lay-gout the mighty sits on your mats, with a hunger in his liver! And I! And I!" he muttered.

Suddenly around them where they stood motionless as stone in the middle of the silent darkness squares of light blazed out in a circle. The doorway mats had been whisked away from two dozen little beehive-shaped thatched dwellings all around, as if one had done it, and the torches being nursed within blazed forth through the open doorways.

They had landed in the middle of the B'gi village.

CHAPTER 6

ALL around them the doorways blazed, little men came rushing out from them with blazing flambeaux, little women, little men, with curious long heads, pot-bellied, wrinkle-faced, like black gnomes.

From a somewhat larger beehive dwelling confronting them a majestic four-foot-figure stepped, preceded by two dancing boys playing a shrill weird music on wooden whistles, with his own wrinkled little face, with his own pot belly, with a square of some ancient rotted white man's fabric—it looked like a particularly rain-rotted and wind-torn specimen of an old white German battle banner, with the black cross on it—tied around his neck and falling down his back in lieu of a robe of royal ermine, with a notched wand in his hand for staff and scepter.

In the center of the clearing eight little pigmies sat cross-legged in a line with padded drumsticks held erect and motionless over eight antelope-head drums. The eight little pigmies ducked their heads in unison, in unison they struck their drums.

"Ob ba bawa! Ob ba bawa! He is great and he is mighty! He is glorious and fearless! He is beautiful and magnificent. He is wise, he is immortal! His name is Me-lay-gou the terrible! Glory to Me-lay-gou the mighty! Glory to Me-lay-gou the brave and mighty! Glory to Me-lay-gou the beautiful and mighty! Glory and glory forever and ever to Me-lay-gou the wonderful, the mighty, the great white lord of lords!" beat the eight little pigmies on their drums.

Preceded by his writhing, strutting, cake-walking, whistling fife-boys, the pigmy king came out to the chair of Me-lay-gou the mighty. He fell upon his knees and prostrated himself on the ground.

"Glory to Me-lay-gou the great and mighty!" he said. "I am Ze Amba the son of Ze Zara the grandson of Ze Zomber the great-grandson of Ze Zaikut who lived a thousand years! And we have all been great and mighty kings and have lived a thousand years! But in a thousand generations have we not seen the wonder of it, in a thousand generations of the kings of the forest we have not been honored by a lord

so great and mighty nor shall we be again till the world end. Me-lay-gou the magnificent, I am but the flea upon the small head-flea which you pick off and crush between your fingers. I am but the worm within the worm of the tumbo grub which burrows in your foot. Me-lay-gou the mighty, welcome, who have come to sit upon my mats. What I have to offer from my crown to the life of my own miserable groveling body is yours at your command, great lord!"

And he struck his wizened little face three times upon the ground with dull and reverberating thuds. Milegout the magnificent, though he could not understand the clicking pigmy speech, was well pleased by the demonstration of respect and devotion. He holstered his gun and put his sword down. Clasping his bottle of cognac by the neck, with a great belly sigh he got down.

"Pod, pod, pod, pod! Pod, pod, pod, pod! He is great and he is mighty! He is terrible and he is dreadful!" beat the eight little pigmies on their drums.

The pigmy king clapped his hands. He shouted orders in a rapid clicking to eight corners of the clearing, with his brow sweating, an intense and anxious frown upon his wrinkled little face. In the shadows of the circle beyond the blazing flambeaux little runners went darting off into the darkness. Preceded by the dancing, gyrating fife-boys like a couple of writhing, whistling worms, Milegout and von Dormer followed the pigmy king into his ten-by-ten royal palace, bending beneath the royal doorway.

They sat cross-legged on the earth floor in the palace of Ze Amba, king of the B'gis, awaiting supper, looking out through the open doorway at the flambeaux and the row of little drummers and the smooth hard dancing ground in the center of the village, with the great darkness all around. A little man came running to the doorway. He thrust his wrinkled face in with a rapid clicking. He ran off again into the darkness.

Behind the hut, through the small rear door, fire could be seen heaped high in the communal stone stove, and the shadowy figures of the little women moving about it. The smell of strange pigmy messes cooking arose not too palatably on the air from there. Milegout wrinkled up his nose and took a drink from the bottle. He even felt so pleasant now that he proffered it to von Dormer and the pigmy king.

THE torches flared outside, casting shadows. In the middle of the clearing the eight little pigmies beat upon their drums. Suddenly into the circle of light before their eight bent, industrious figures she had swung, Nyissa the dancer, with her dusky, lithe body, her amber grace, her great eyes staring through the doorway at Louis-Philippe de Milegout, as if fascinated by him like a bird. Pod, pod, pod, pod! Pod, pod, pod, pod! played the eight little pigmies on their drums.

She was dancing, not the wild white man's malinga, the Spanish dance from Guinea, but the more native gazelle dance, the dance of the shadows of the forest, of the light and wary doe. One foot paused, and one foot paused, stepping light, light and furtively, with her great eyes flaring round her, with a quivering of her nostrils, like the wary doe who smells the bloody hunter, her glances wide with terror, going through the part.

"Moné zip, ale a daneyu—" her voice sang, with a little frightened cry. "Little gazelle, the night has deepened—" Soft and eerily she sang.

Staring all around her at the darkness, while the firelight played and she paused one-footed. Milegout watched her for a little while with head a little swaying. But he preferred the other dance of hers. This art stuff bored him. He would have the other presently. He could wait.

"Ze Zaikut bought her to be my bride when I was a babe as she was," said the little king, Ze Amba, proudly. "Many elephant tusks she cost. We sold the mats from under us and the copper earrings from our noses, and still we had to borrow from other tribes. We went into debt for a thousand years. But she is the gazelle of the forest, and a pearl without price. Because of her we are famous everywhere. Ze Zaikut had wanted her to breed strong pigmy kings by me, but she is more beautiful as she is."

Milegout moistened his lips.

"You mean she is not actually your wife?"

"Oh, yes, she is my wife. She was Ze

Zaikut's wife, and she was Ze Zomber's and Ze Zara's wife. She is the wife of all of us. She is the gazelle of the forest."

"I mean has no man ever loved her?" muttered Milegout, staring at the little wrinkled pigmy. "What a waste!"

"What is love?" said the pigmy wonderingly. His little wrinkled face grew sad. "Perhaps it is something that we do not know," he said humbly. "We know so little. But we know that she is beautiful to watch, and that is what she does, she dances. The great white lord seems contemptuous. Yet what else could we use her for? Should we use her as one of the breeding or cooking women, or perhaps as one of the women who gather ants? There are others to do those things. To us she is beautiful to watch."

"So you think now that she was worth the price, Ze Amba?" said von Dormer heavily.

He sat against the center pole of the little hut, with his head leaning back against it heavily. The drink which Milegout had given him had gone like fire through his starved blood, and his head rolled a little.

"Oh, yes, Hé Do-mé, she was worth it, though it was beyond one ever heard of. She was worth it, had we had it, twice."

"She was born beneath the earth," said von Dormer dreamily, "on the night that Bwamba died. There were only the three of us left. She came into the world as Bwamba went out of it, so that there still were three. Her mother lived a week, then her mother's milk went dry. Her mother died.

"I got away with her slung in my kerchief tied around my neck. She nursed on hippopotamus and bush-cow milk. I knew that it would make her sleek and strong. Sometimes she lay cradled in the crotch of a tree while the hunt for me was all around. The gliding snake fondled her, and the butterfly danced about her; the birds sang for her, and the monkeys came softly and watched her while she slept. And she grew brown and strong. She learned music, rippling movement. She learned also patience, silence; she learned to obey.

"Ze Zaikut said, 'Suppose she does not survive?' Ze Zaikut said, 'The price for the goods is high, and who pays the insurance if she dies, as one child out of two must do before it has reached man or woman age?' But I knew that she would survive and would be a paragon among women. I am glad that you do not think I asked too high a price, Ze Amba."

"You sold her?" said Milegout with bulging eyes, with disgust in his voice. "You sold her to these people?"

Von Dormer opened his gaunt eyes a moment.

"WHY not? I had saved her to sell," he said coldly. "It was not easy, those first weeks and months. I went hungry myself at times to see that she was fed. There were times, when the hunt was on, when it would have been easier for me to have left her beneath a bush, as a proprietary offering to the leopards. Should I not realize something on all that?

"I would have liked to have saved her for a white man, who might have paid a hundred times as much, but the investment over the years, waiting for a better return, was more than I could see my clear to swing. Considering her youth, I knew that the B'gis would pay the highest price. I came into their village with her one night when the Country Devil was walking abroad and they dared not flee into the night from me. Ze Zaikut and I haggled for hours, but I stuck to my price. I sold the stuff I got for her for twelve British pounds. It fed me for almost five years."

At intervals three or four others of the little men had come rushing silently to the door, speaking rapidly with a click to the little pigmy king, and had turned and gone out again into the darkness running. Ze Amba's little wrinkled face was worried.

She was still dancing in the circle of the dwindling torches. Shadows played upon her amber body. She would dance as long as there were drums.

The smell of cooking came from the stone stove behind the hut. It came to von Dormer's stiffened nostrils, where he lay with eyes closed, head back against the post. How long, how long? He could smell rice and peppers. They wouldn't give him and Milegout any of their pigmy messes of carrion and ants, that set up a poison in a white man's gut. He and Milegout were too royal. He smelled the cooking, and his gaunt entrails screamed inside him. How long, how long?

"Ground nut chop will be ready present-

ly, O lord," said Ze Amba, looking at von Dormer with his little wrinkled face so anxiously, reading his hunger.

Milegout swayed, bottle in hand. He wiped his mouth. He offered it to the pigmy king.

"Have her come and eat with us," he said. "Tell her to join us for dinner."

His tone was a little thick, his Bantu fragmentary, his gestures not too conclusive. Fortunately the little pigmy king did not understand him.

"The B'gis don't eat with their women, Milegout," said von Dormer. "It's damned tabu. The devil-devil would get them. It might get them even if they knew you had suggested it."

Smiling ironically, with his eyes closed. How much Milegout had to learn! How much to learn. . . .

More little heads in the doorway, wrinkled, shaking. One by one they came. Ze Amba talked rapidly and desperately to them in the clicking bush tongue, which is not Bantu. Which is, in fact, not like a tongue of men at all, but more like a rapid popping of a man's tongue against his teeth, such language as the monkeys might use. The little sweating men at the door ran off. Milegout passed the bottle again, and this time von Dormer took a deeper swallow, and so did the pigmy king.

"He is trying to get a young goat, I think," explained von Dormer, laughing a little giddily and foolishly with the heat in his starved veins. "Their click is a little beyond me when they start smacking it too fast. They are pretty damned poor, I guess. Poorer even than I had imagined. They don't want to feed us ants. They give a white man a poison in his gut. I couldn't stand them myself, and they'd kill you. Ze Amba's trying to borrow from all the other jungle villages. He's sending men out into the jungle, too. Maybe they'll get a python. I missed a fat one this morning, not far away. My God, they take forever! I'm hungry."

"I'm beginning to feel starved myself," said Milegout. "Do you know that I haven't eaten since breakfast."

"It is too bad about you," said von Dormer. "It is too, too, too, too—"

He laughed crazily. The liquor had been too much for his starved blood.

Pod, pod, pod, pod! The little drums were subsiding like a fall of peas. The torches were dying down. As the drums died down, as the torches failed, the dancing girl, Nyissa, faded into the shadows.

Milegout smiled. He felt almost fond of von Dormer, laughing so crazily. Good old von Dormer. Quite a fellow when you get to know him. Put him in pants, and he'd be white. Milegout's own blood was bright and warm.

"The trouble with you, von Dormer," he said, "is that you're a man at loose ends. You're the type who should never have come to Africa. You're not the sort who is psychologically a roamer and an adventurer. You really belong in a dull routine job in some office taking care of screws and fishhooks, probably married to some nice dowdy little middle-class woman who would take care of you and make you wear your rubbers in the rain and nurse your colds and feed you wienerschnitzel. You need stability like that to keep your emotional balance. Why didn't you ever get married?"

"I was going to once," said von Dormer. "She was coming out from home, a childhood sweetheart. I had painted a bright picture of Bouboufonké in my letters to her. She was looking forward to it wildly. She would probably have been disappointed in it if she had seen it, of course. A hot, mosquito-bitten little hell-hole in the back bush, a puddle for small frogs. No offense, Milegout.

"But I had done the best I could with it, had bought the great gilt bed on which our children were to be born, the big table at which they were all to eat, with myself sitting at the head carving paterfamilias style, the bureau in which they would stow away their clothes so very neatly. Six strong sons with blond hair, strong men for the jungle—I had planned it all.

"She was blonde herself, blue eyes, that sort of thing. Her name, I just remembered it, was Hilda. She was white, of course, pure white. A little prudish, but she loved me, and she was my dream." Von Dormer laughed.

"Funny," he said, "I can't think what she looked like, any more. When I close my eyes and try to see her, all I see are negroid features and brown skin. Well, the great dining table at which all those blood sons were going to eat is the council table

at Bouboufonké now, behind which beneath the *nkalabande* for eighteen years generations of French administrators have sat bored and sweating, listening to the blacks argue their little lawsuits about dogs and women at court-palaver and mammy-palaver. And I guess that the other items of furniture have seen other uses as strange."

"What happened?" said Milegout.

"Oh, she was sailing on the first of August, nineteen fourteen," von Dormer said. "I was going to meet her down in Dakar, and we were going to be married by the consul there on the fifteenth of September, after she had arrived. Britain declared war on Germany, and her gray ships kept our ships from the seas. On the fifteenth of September the expeditionary forces of the allies had marched into the Cameroons, and I was meat in the bush, or little better, a wild man in the jungle, fighting with my blacks against them in the south and east and north. With my damned old blacks and their women.

"I marched them over the mountains," said von Dormer. "Where they said no man could go. Women and men, they marched with me, and if they didn't, they died. There's a song the black girls still sing about me," he said. "Did you ever watch the black girls dance and sing? *Aie-ho!"* he sang in his cracked croaking voice, leaning back against the hut post. *"Hé Do-mé has gone over the mountains, and with him we must go! Aie-yo!"* He had the bottle by the neck and he was swinging it, his eyes closed, his head rolling back and forth upon the post.

"Aie-yo! Hé Do-mé is marching again! Aie-yrup!" he croaked. "It goes something like that. You ought to hear the blacks sing it while they dance!"

"Why didn't you go back after the war?" said Milegout. "To the nice little sweetheart who was waiting and the domestic peace and the job in screws and fishhooks that you were cut out for?"

"I'll tell you," said von Dormer drunkenly. "Strictly confidentially. You are a gentleman, and so am I. Never talk about the women except with gentlemen. She was there in her occupied village in the Rhineland after the war, see? There was some swine in command of the village. She wouldn't be nice to him, and that made him mad, and he let her and her family starve. They were the big shots of the village, she was the Baroness Hilda—well. Anyway, the swine was sore at her, and he wanted to show her up, that she wasn't any better than anybody else. She had some younger sisters, and they had to eat, so she broke her pride and came and begged the Frenchman. Well, the sisters were starving.

"Ha, ha!" von Dormer laughed. "She was blonde, I remember that, but when I try to think of her all I can see is black."

"What was," said Milegout, "the name of this village on the Rhine?"

"Schlee—Schleesdorf," said von Dormer drunkenly. "Ever hear of it?"

"Oh!" said Milegout. "No, I never heard of it. There are lots of towns in Germany. I have never been in Germany myself."

"Ha, ha, ha!" said von Dormer. "I was pretty wild at first when I heard about it, I guess, the way that things had happened. I would have liked to have tracked that damned rhinoceros down and given him a punch in the snoot. But time changes everything. And down the rain barrel. That's where she stuck her head in and drowned herself, the fool. They say that I am crazy, but I would rather be that way than full of thinking—"

He lurched, hiccuping. He almost lost the support of the post behind him, falling backwards.

THE drums had died to a faint podding. The eight little pigmy drummers sat in a row, with drumsticks slowly, slowly dropping, as if their hands were tired. The torches had long ago burned down. In his agitation Milegout had not noticed the brown girl fading into the shadows at the edge of her dance, how long, how long ago?

He had finished the bottle. The food was coming on, a great steaming platter three feet wide, and piled up high, fragrant smells of peppers, meat, peanuts, coconut, plantains. Four little pigmy women brought it in. They sat it down upon the floor. They stepped back hastily, not to desecrate the feast. Around it on the ground the two white men squatted with the pigmy king. Von Dormer's claws dug into the fragrant mess. He wolfed it with both hands.

Milegout was ravenous, too, with the hunger of alcohol and the hours since he

had breakfasted beneath the *nkalabande*. Never such a hunger in his gut. It screamed for food. He dug his hands in, as the other was doing. He smacked his lips, his mustache was greasy, his lips gobbled, his teeth champed and sucked, he grunted and whoofled and snarled.

"Good eating," he took time to grunt. "What is it?"

"Ground nut chop," mouthed von Dormer. "Best dish in West Africa. When you've eaten it, boy, you know you've eaten something."

"What kind of meat?" said Milegout.

"Don't ask. Maybe dog, maybe snake."

"Good eating, anyway," Milegout grunted, gulped, and gobbled. "Some day I will write a book about it. That was what I came to Africa for, and that's no lie."

He wiped his hands upon his uniform, but it was hard to get them clean. His uniform was greasy all over. Slobs of food still trickled down the corners of his mouth, but there was no more room for any more inside him. He sank back on his hips heavily with a sigh, full, stuffed, satiated, bloated. He sucked his fingers one by one.

"Yes," he said, "I like good eating. I learned good eating on the Rhine. The German girls used to fix me their fanciest dishes. I knew the Baroness Hilda, von Dormer, don't fool yourself. Requisitioned her castle, in fact. To hell with her, and you, too."

He felt strong, he felt brave, he felt ferocious, he felt victorious and unafraid of von Dormer—with food, for one thing, and for another, because von Dormer had keeled back against the post with his eyes closed, and he had passed out.

"Ba ba ma toe. . . ."

Oh, there they were beating again! No, that wasn't the little podding pigmy drums. A faint and eerie prickle crept beneath Milegout's skin, all over. It sounded like the great drum at Bouboufonké. Yet he could not be hearing that great drum with his ears that were slightly deaf, so far off through the lost jungle.

Through the demon-haunted jungle.

Faint, sonorous, slow, and deep.

"Ba ba ma toe!"

Von Dormer lay with his head back against the roof post. Now, he might be able to tell what that drum was, if he hadn't passed out. Milegout looked thoughtfully, sucking his fingers. No, von Dormer hadn't passed out. He had died of a glut, a surfeit. He had taken more than his gaunt, starved body, his screaming intestines, could assimilate, and it had poisoned him. Or else there had been some poison. . . .

"To hell with you," said Milegout. "I will have all Africa! You are a dead ape! I am the king! I am the king!" he roared. "The king of Africa!"

He turned to Ze Amba, who crouched beside the dish, but had not eaten, while the white man had eaten.

"Now I want to watch the dancer."

THROUGH the darkness Nbem skittered full of terror, Nbem the drummer, Nbem the Yebekolo, still clutching his drum sticks that he had been holding when he had fled from the sight of that gaunt starved face, those terrible red eyes, peering from the foliage of the great silk-cotton limb above him, and from the sound of that dreadful croaking voice, "I hunger!"

Oh, he had been only the littlest of little black pickaninnies, had Nbem, the drummer, when there had come the time of the great war between the whites. And the Bata men and the Island men had been marching in with their great guns that said pow-pow, and his father Bwamba had kissed him, and had taken his favorite wife Sasa, and with Hé Do-mé the Great Crocodile had gone away.

And there had been wars, and there had been wars, and there had been women weeping, and there had been hunger. And the word had come that Hé Do-mé had led them over the mountains, and that now in the mountains he was hiding out with Bwamba and Sasa, and a handful more.

Mdiko, Nbem's black ugly Ngumba mother, had clasped him to her breast.

"They hunger," she had said. "But they will not die. For your father Bwamba is a great devil priest, weeping boy, and there are things allowed by the old law lest a devil priest should die! The old law," she had tried to comfort him, "and they say it is sin. But surely it is a greater sin that a devil priest should die. There, there, my little pickaninny!"

But he had felt her arms quivering about him, and she had been trembling with him.

They were starving in the mountains, but

they would not die! The terrible things there had been within that cave! Nbem knew. Nbem knew, for his black sires for generations had been Yebekolos, as were the sires of all men once, and his father was a devil-devil man, though he was a Christian boy. There had been the wailing of the women and the woodsmokes in the cave. The women first, but Hé Do-mé must have held out against their taking Sasa, and Bwamba perhaps not averse, for she had been a Mpongwe and young. Now there must be the men. The lots cast in the nights, by the wood fires smoking, the gaunt spectral faces, the hush as the lots fell. The next of them to go.

There had come the night when there must have been only the three of them, and Bwamba had said to Hé Do-mé, "We must have this woman, my wife, your woman! So says the devil-devil, and I obey."

But it had been Bwamba, who died.

Oh, the great ghost drum that had told the jungle! Drumming the death cry of Bwamba! For a devil priest had died by violence, and it had been a sin.

There had been a child born that night, Nyissa the dancer, pale and amber brown. But still the hunger, still the hunger, and Sasa could not nurse, she had gone dry.

Ba ba ma toe!

Hé Do-mé had taken that child with him when he had suddenly seen the way open, and had got away. Why? Why! But he had found a waterhole where there was game, so he had had food enough. He had saved her, to sell to the little people.

The poor little people, he had taken all they had. Nyissa the dancer, the gazelle of the forest.

They said that the ghost drum of Bwamba still beat when anyone did that thing again. There had been the bad Bulu man ten years ago and his mother-in-law, and many had said they had heard the ghost drum beating then, and all the time while he hung by the rope to which the French had hanged him. Oh, yes, the drum could still speak, the great ghost drum of Bwamba! But Nbem the drummer hoped that he would not hear the great ghost drum tonight.

Still as he ran, still as he ran, Nbem's two sticks within his hands beat spasmodically on the empty blackness rushing before him. Beat, beat, beat, his hands he could not control. *Ba ba ma toe! Ba ba ma toe!*

"NOW!" said Milegout, breathing heavily. "Now I want the girl, the dancer!"

The pigmy king crouched on his hands, with wrinkled face.

Faint, sonorous, the drum was beating in the night. In the lost jungle, in the demon-haunted wilderness. Von Dormer sat leaning back against the roof post with his skeleton grin. He had died, and it might have been poison which had done it, slipped in by the hand of the little pigmy king, for the little pigmy king had not liked well the thing which von Dormer had forced on him. But von Dormer still was grinning. For he had fed at last. He had not died empty, not lost and alone in the demon-haunted jungle, with no drum to beat the mourning cry for him. He had died full, and beneath a roof now in the company of men.

Grinning.

"But, O lord—" said the little pigmy king to Milegout.

He was crouching by the great platter, with his little wrinkled face. And there were tears upon his face, there were tears of hopelessness and emptiness and despair. And suddenly Milegout remembered that the little pigmy king had not eaten, he had not eaten at all, while he and von Dormer had been eating.

"But, O lord—" he said with a futile gesture, and the tears ran down his face.

That dancing amber girl!

Milegout understood. . . .

THE new commandant at Bouboufonké is a thin, earnest young Frenchman, a graduate of the Sorbonne, who has a hobby of entomology. He goes out in the forests with a net, flying around with spectacles on his face, in shorts and bare-headed, leaping and plopping down with small victorious yells on any butterfly, beetle, mosquito or bug he sees. And since there are a good many bugs along the Upper Bom, it keeps him pretty well out of mischief.

The grizzled old chief of colonial personnel back in Paris shakes his head. He says a little pessimistically that they all either kill themselves or go crazy at Bouboufonké, and some do both, and perhaps the station had better be folded up.

FREE!

TWO YEARS' SUBSCRIPTION TO

ADVENTURE

WITH YOUR PURCHASE OF

THE CURTAIN NEVER FALLS

by Joey Adams (Published at $3.00)

Everybody knows Jackie Mason, the principal character of "The Curtain Never Falls." He is the punk kid who is pushed along by Dad the hoofer; the bragging would-be man. Remember last summer's social director? He's Jackie. And the radio M. C., the Palace Theatre star, the movie idol and the television prankster—he is all these people rolled into one. In this book you will also meet Judy Kane, the Hollywood queen bee; and Dorothy Rensselaer who marries Jackie but saves herself for somebody else.

We commend "The Curtain Never Falls" to you, because in reading it you will share some of the most ecstatic, exciting and sometimes bitter experiences that only a showman like Joey Adams can write about.

AND

THE PLOTTERS

by John Roy Carlson (Published at $3.00)

FOURTH PRINTING

"You will need this book to keep your facts straight. John Roy Carlson has served our country well again."

—Walter Winchell

Charles G. Bolte in the N. Y. Times Book Review says: "The campaign described in "Under Cover" was startling and dangerous enough. The campaign described in "The Plotters" is clearly of greater danger and of incomparably greater significance. . . .

"Carlson is a first-rate reporter . . . He names names, dates and places; he reproduces photostatic copies of letters, checks, posters and pamphlets; he records conversations; he takes nothing for granted . . . If anybody is passing out Americanism awards this year, here's one vote for John Roy Carlson."

Illustrated with sensational documents.

IMPORTANT

Yes, you can have 12 issues of ADVENTURE (regular subscription price $2.50)—over a hundred exciting stories of adventure and menace. A full two years' reading enjoyment for men—

AND

THE CURTAIN NEVER FALLS plus THE PLOTTERS (published at $6.00). An $8.50 value—for only $3.95—far less than the retail value of the books alone!

Adventure BOOK CLUB

Yes you can have all three of these tremendous reading values for less than the published price—if you order today! This special offer is good only while our limited supply of THE CURTAIN NEVER FALLS and THE PLOTTERS last!

Order Today—Fill in coupon now!

ADVENTURE BOOK CLUB
Popular Publications, Inc., Dept. D
205 East 42nd St., New York 17, N. Y.

Send me THE CURTAIN NEVER FALLS and THE PLOTTERS (retail price $6.00) AND enter my subscription to ADVENTURE for two years. I enclose remittance in the amount of $3.95.

Name .....

Street and Number .....

City..... Zone..... State.....

Nolan saw the steamer then, a shapeless shadow bearing down. . . .

NO MAN'S

A desperate ship and a reckless crew—on a voyage to nowhere. . . .

NOW, with late afternoon traffic eased somewhat along the Bayport waterfront, the taxi was able to stop within a few yards of the pier entrance. Captain Nolan got out and stood for a moment in reflective silence, looking up at the peculiarly rounded red hull, with the words *Wreck Reef* lettered hugely along the tum-

PASSAGE

By STEVE HAIL

ble-home sides. And in that moment, last distorted backstays of the sun slanted through a rift in the banked storm clouds to seaward, giving the lightship an appearance of clumsy inadequacy.

Nolan, though, knew better and he felt again—more strongly now, knowing this might well be the vessel's final assignment—that strange admixture of affection and bondage that a shipmaster holds for his command. Then his firm mouth twisted and his graying brows drew together as the thought recurred that this also might be the last tour of duty for himself.

The cab driver waited with coat collar turned up against the bite of the raw wind

funneling in through the harbor entrance off the limitless plains of the Pacific. "Glad it's you, not me, goin' to sea tonight. Me, I'll take slippers and a fireside on a night like this."

Nolan smiled, with a quick understanding warmth that relieved the graveness of his faded eyes. He shrugged and said, "One man's meat—" and paid his fare and quickly started walking toward the foot of the gangway.

Two deck officers from the freighter lying at the next dock looked around as he passed. One of them, grinning, called after him, "You planning on a long voyage, Cap?"

It was an old joke, but Nolan smiled in response and said, "You never know," and passed on. Behind him the other mate, a squat man with close-cropped hair, spoke to his companion.

The words, scornful yet edged with envy, were borne to Nolan on the bitter wind. "Voyage to nowhere, you mean. A day's run up the coast, then a month at anchor just warming your rump. A month to catch up on your sleep. A floating lighthouse guarding a hunk of rock. No trouble, no nothin'. There's the way to go to sea!"

An ember of resentment warmed in Nolan. Here was no landsman. This man. . . .

But he let it go and climbed the gangplank to the deserted decks.

The door to the messroom was open and Otto Hotz, the seaman who had been with the service nearly as long as Nolan himself, sat at the table playing solitaire.

He looked up.

Nolan nodded his greeting. "Everybody aboard, Otto?"

"Yah. And drunk." The statement was without particular interest or resentment, passed along as something the captain ought to know. Then: "A message from the uptown office. You're to call Inspector Rand."

The asthmatic sobbing of pumps arose from below-decks, which meant that Chief Engineer McNab was on the job, fussing with his ancient coal-burning engine. But Nolan heard the sounds with the back of his mind, his thoughts on Rand and what he now knew to be imminent. Like the death of a friend. . . .

RAND answered at once, sounding twice as old as his admitted sixty years. "You, Joe? Well, it's come. The coast guard is blanketing us in beginning the thirtieth. It's official now. This is the last trip for the *Wreck Reef*. A replacement vessel is off the ways and on her way out here. Modern, equipped with the best, radio, everything. You'll take over when you get back."

Nolan said softly, "I hope."

"I recommended you," Rand said. "It was my last official act." His voice was flat, lifeless.

There was nothing to say and Nolan stood quietly, staring at the random scribblings on the wall, listening to the false cheerfulness in Rand's weary voice. "Retired on half pay. A good break, really. Better than I expected. Now—" When he went on the voice had become crisp, businesslike. "A Commander Warham is taking over. A young man, an academy man, but an old hand at offshore work—he says. Cutters. Rescue stuff."

Nolan said, "That's fine."

"He's making the trip, to check on procedure and personnel. He'll be with you till the supply tender picks him up. Captain Jaentz and his *Ariadne* will be up that way in about a week. So, till then—" And suddenly Inspector Rand was no longer speaking. It was Alec Rand, friend, confidant, shipmate of twenty years. "Joe, till then you watch your step. Let him have his way. He's a—"

"I know," Nolan said, and he did know. It was all there in Rand's voice, in what he had left unsaid.

"Meanwhile, fair winds and don't worry."

"No," Nolan said, "I won't." He hung up and opened the door and stood there a moment feeling the salt wind on his face, seeing the passing of a way of life that he had known for nearly a quarter of a century. The merger of the two government services had been inevitable, but somehow he had never thought of it as coming in his own time. But now it was accomplished fact and what lay ahead he had no way of knowing. Certainly there would be changes. New methods, new regulations, new commanding officers like—like, well, Commander Warham. Heads would roll. They

had already. *In the best interests of the service, Mr. Rand. A little old for active duty as we plan it. You will be taken care of, of course. Retirement on half pay, say, or—*

Rand, yes, but it could have been, might still be, Nolan. He shook the picture from his mind and went back aboard and directly to his room.

There were voices now, thick and argumentative, in the quarters farther down the alleyway and Nolan's smile died and his eyes lowered to the crew list lying on the desk before him. A new gang, as usual, except for Otto and Engineer McNab. Men from whom you could expect anything or nothing, yet men for whose welfare he alone, as master, was responsible. They would. . . .

Footsteps, firm, as if they knew where they were going, were outside the room and Nolan looked up in time to see what must be Commander Warham. The commander was an academy man, all right. No doubt of that. It was in his erect bearing, in the immaculately uniformed body, in the quick curl of his short upper lip as his cool eyes went slowly over Nolan. What Warham saw—the baggy sweater, the wrinkled khakis, the scuffed shoes—he didn't like, judging by his scornful smile.

"You're Nolan?"

Nolan felt his neck muscles throbbing with abrupt unreasoning anger, but he told himself that instinctive hostility was foolish, premature. He got up and said, "Yes. You're Commander Warham. Of course." He worked hard on a smile, got it going. "You'll find us a little informal, probably, after what you're used to. There's spare room up the alleyway. Make yourself at home."

"Thank you, Captain." The smile was gone. He shot one of his immaculate cuffs, glanced at his watch. "Aren't we due out of here if we're to take over from the *Relief* on schedule? They'll be expecting us. What's the delay?"

"They'll be expecting us when they see us," Nolan said dryly. "Delay?" He waved a hand at the work orders filed on a clip board above the desk. Urgent engine room repairs, all of them, but canceled and crossed out.

Nolan said, "The department seems to feel that the less money spent on a vessel that has outlived its usefulness the better. So my engineer is making repairs the best he can. I'm waiting for word from him now. He—"

McNab was in the doorway even as he spoke, a small thin shadow of a man, and Nolan said, "Commander, our chief engineer. Mac, you about ready?"

McNab's fragile shoulders lifted. "Ready as I'll ever be. That bucket of rusted bolts and baling wire—"

Nolan smiled with a deep understanding affection for the little man. It was McNab's often-voiced contention that the *Wreck Reef's* power plant was one of Robert Fulton's cast off experimental models, but in spite of everything he always managed, somehow, to keep it running. He now said, "Fireman's passed out, but I got steam up. I'll—"

Warham scowled. "Glad you brought that up, Chief." He turned to Nolan. "From what I've seen, none of the crew are in any condition to go to sea. What do you intend to do about it?"

"Do?" Nolan looked at him, puzzled. Sure, the crew were skidroad derelicts, broke and hungry. Hungry enough, even, to sign on a little undersized, overaged tub that went nowhere, but in spite of it managed to roll your guts out night and day, every day. Hungry enough to accept duty that squeezed your brain dry with solitude and confinement and boredom. But the *Wreck Reef* was lucky to get them. Or anybody. "Do?" Nolan said again and knew he ought to shrug and let it go at that. What was it Rand had said? *Joe, watch your step.* . . . But the blood was hammering in his temples now, watching the curl on that handsome mouth. "Do? I could hold their heads, I guess, if that would help. But it wouldn't. So we'll take them to sea and do the best we can."

Warham flushed. "Very well, Captain," he said at last. "It's your problem, not mine. So, if and when you're ready—" He turned stiffly and walked away.

"Mac," Nolan said, "you think that mill of yours will last out another month? And that beat-up mooring gear?"

McNab's eyes went to the clip board above the desk. "The brass seems to think it will. My opinion? Well, I'll do my best."

Nolan smiled. "I know you will." He

turned away. "I'll give you a stand-by in five minutes."

But, alone, the smile died quickly and he found himself thinking of Rand again and his parting words. *Fair winds and don't worry.* . . . Well, he could use the fair winds, all right. No wind at all would be even better, but that was too much to hope for in this season. *Don't worry?* No, he wouldn't. There was no reason for it, really. No reason at all, except for Anna and the kids, and the vital necessity of staying alive and holding onto the only job he knew.

HE GOT up and went forward to the messroom. Hotz was still there, alone, munching on a piece of bread in stolid acceptance of the fact that there would probably be no supper tonight.

"You can get the lines aboard, Otto," Nolan told him, then climbed the stairs to the wheelhouse and picked up the engine room speaking tube.

The cab driver had had a point. It was a night for a fireside and slippers, but neither was a part of the *Wreck Reef's* equipment. It was sea boots and oilskins from the minute she poked her blunt snout outside the jetty. The sky was filled with low scud and rain, and the seas marched down on them like huge undulating monsters, licking white-lipped along the little vessel's bulwarks. Nolan put the engine on half speed, held as close inshore as he dared and settled down to slug it out with wind and water.

Thereafter, he and Otto stood watch and watch at the wheel, waiting for, though hardly expecting, relief from the rest of the crew, hung over and useless in their bunks below. Once, Warham made staggering way up the bridge ladder, noticing at once the absence of the watch.

He said, "The hooligans! You'll log this, Captain, of course. I'll see that their termination slips are made out the minute we get back."

Nolan looked at him curiously. "Then you'll be a minute late," he said dryly. "They'll be long gone before we get the ratguards on the lines. And logging won't do much good. Or threats. Their papers say they're seamen. I imagine they are. The next few days will tell. Meanwhile, I assure you we'll do the best we can."

"I hope it's good enough." Warham's eyes were on the dark loom of land close aboard. He studied it for a while, then said, "It looks to me as if we're making as much leeway as headway. This all the power we can turn up?"

"No," Nolan said, "but it's all my judgment tells me is prudent."

"Judgment?" Warham laughed unpleasantly. "On a pot like this, where you lay at anchor for a month at a time? Well, we're not at anchor now." He waved a hand at the boiling line of surf visible to starboard. "A lee shore close aboard in this kind of weather is no place to be. I'd increase speed, if I were you, and gain some sea room."

What was it Rand had said? *Let him have his way.* Good advice, perhaps. But was it? Nolan thought not.

"You're not me," he said. "Maybe for a rescue cutter, yes—with a thousand horses beneath your feet. But the *Wreck Reef* is old. So is her engine. The less strain we put on both, the better." He shook his head. "No, we'll do it my way."

There was color in the commander's cheeks; his handsome mouth was ugly. He started to speak, then changed his mind. He shrugged and stalked away. Nolan, watching, shook his head. It looked like it was going to be a lovely tour of duty in more ways than one. Well, a week at most and the *Ariadne* would be taking Warham off. Things could wait till then.

They did not. Mid-afternoon the following day found them off the reef, with the *Relief* already shortened up on her anchor cable, eager to get on home. Nolan watched her stagger free of her position, saw the puffs of sonic steam that were her parting salute dissolve into nothingness, not even hearing the sound above the fury of the wind. Then he worked the *Wreck Reef* ahead over the unseen shelf below and dropped the mushroom anchor in thirty fathoms, a mile off the stone-fanged shoals that foamed and thundered at their back.

He stayed on the bridge, watching the little vessel trying to dip her rails under before the huge seas and swells rolling in from halfway round the world. The anchor appeared to be holding, although each time they surged back on the chain the crash and rattle of the snubbing gear was like concen-

trated mortar fire. He turned away at last, satisfied as he'd ever be, and went below.

He found the crew sitting sullenly at the bare messroom table, but someone had managed coffee. That had helped. They looked now as if they might live. Nolan told off a watch list, ordered the oil beacons filled and hoisted aloft. Then he went back to the bridge for a final inspection. Wind and sea had increased, if anything, blowing gale force in the gusts. The vessel had become a wild thing, writhing and fighting against the restraining bonds of the cable.

The *Relief,* he saw, was already hull down over the hill of the horizon, trailing a ragged yarn of smoke. He watched it idly for a moment, then feeling the numbness of exhaustion working through him, he went to his room and lay down, fully clothed.

He clung to the tossing, erupting mattress with elbows and knees and hands, trying to keep his thoughts on his family, trying not to worry, telling himself that everything would work out all right. Thinking thus, he slept.

HE AWOKE to instant consciousness, aware of some subtle change in the vessel's motion. He rose to one elbow and looked out the porthole and saw that the night was done. A low overcast was scudding in before a wind that hauled into the south, filtering the dawn light to the gray opaqueness of ground glass. The vessel was plunging and rearing to confused seas as the shifting wind worked crosswise to the westerly swell. The crash of the snubbing gear was a continuous clamor now and he arose and went up to the wheelhouse and saw that the anchor chain was stretched as taut as an iron bar. Something would have to part soon, unless the strain were relieved, but he hesitated before calling upon McNab to start the engine.

But there was no alternative and he called the engine room and said, "Put her on slow ahead, Mac."

They rode easier after that, but he had the seaman on watch unshackle the chain in the locker and thereafter stand by in the deckhouse near the windlass just in case they had to let go in a hurry. Nolan himself did not leave the wheelhouse. He braced himself in a corner and gazed out upon the vast unrest of water, gauging the strain on both ship and gear as best he could.

Once, Commander Warham came up from below, but he did not speak. That was fine with Nolan. Warham appeared already to have had his fill of the *Wreck Reef.* His attitude spoke plainly of his desire to see the *Ariadne* heaving over the rim of the horizon. The desire was mutual, Nolan decided. The quicker the better.

But three days later the wind was still from the south, driving before it a leaden, persistent rain, intermixed with spume ripped off the jagged crests of seas that were running long and high and powerful. Chances were that the *Ariadne* would not attempt contact until the weather moderated, and there was small promise of that. The engine still turned doggedly ahead, half speed now, to ease the tremendous pressure of the avalanching seas.

Then, as daylight waned, the heavens blackened, lowered and split wide open. Visibility narrowed to less than a mile, and Nolan called down to McNab, "Start the bell and whistle."

He waited, listening for the rhythmic pulse of the submarine bell that would go surging outward in ever widening circles through the sea for a distance of fourteen miles. He braced himself for the blast of the steam chime from aloft, the tortured sound that would warn coastwise shipping of their presence.

Then, as they rose high on the crest of a sea, he saw the *Ariadne* appearing with startling suddenness from out the blinding wall of rain. She was plunging and rolling, scooping solid water and flinging it aft in a boiling torrent that appeared to fill her well deck to brimming capacity.

Yet Captain Jaentz did not slow—he came on as if he were commanding a rescue cutter heading for a foundering liner. Nolan, puzzled, watched her until she had passed to windward and ahead. Then she cut her speed and drifted down under the *Wreck Reef's* dubious lee.

She lay there, hove to, wallowing like a dead thing. Her wheelhouse door opened and Jaentz raised a megaphone and shouted, "The *Seal Rock,* ninety miles north, pulled her snubbing gear right out through her planking! Sank like a punctured bucket. Coast guard's hunting for survivors. The

Relief's gone up to take her place, but she didn't have time to refuel. I—"

The roar of the *Wreck Reef's* whistle cut him off, but when it passed he went on: "—got orders to take Commander Warham off. But—" He waved the megaphone in mute eloquence at the gale-lashed corridor of water between them.

Eloquent, that is, to everyone but Warham. He appeared in the wheelhouse doorway then, freshly shaven somehow, and with his bag gripped firmly in one hand. He angled his jaw at the *Ariadne* standing idly by.

"Delay again, Captain? What is it this time?"

Nolan looked at him, then at the ugly, crested seas beyond. "I'm afraid you're stuck with us," he said at last, "like it or not, Commander." He waved a hand at the wild turmoil of water. "No small boat could live in that. In a week, perhaps—"

"Nonsense! I've business ashore, I tell you. This—this *Seal Rock* mess makes it even more imperative. I don't intend to rot out here. I've a bellyful, and more, of this—this—" He flicked a hand in lofty scorn. Then: "This crew of yours—let 'em earn their keep."

Nolan said, "You're right—there isn't much to do here, really. But you're wrong about the rest of it. I've a six man crew, Commander. If it were a matter of life and death you'd have six men offering to take the work boat across. But it isn't. So you'll get no volunteers. And I won't order them to risk their lives out there. Not even for you."

"Won't you now?" Warham's mouth was ringed with white. "Then I will!" He turned toward the *Ariadne,* beckoning her in.

Nolan stared at him, wondering if this was bluff. Somehow, watching those cold dark eyes he knew that it was not. The commander was going to have his way this time. The commander was going to leave. Well, that was fine. In fact, good riddance. Trouble was, this headstrong whim of his involved the risk of other lives. It would take two men at least, more likely four, to pull a boat through such tremendous seas. They were skidroad winos, sure. Nevertheless, they were the *Wreck Reef's* crew; Nolan's crew, for whom he was responsible. No, it was no good, so he'd tell the other so. But Warham was already waving them toward the small boat and. . . .

—"Wait!" But even as he said it, Nolan knew that words were useless. Warham didn't even turn. Nolan stepped forward, reaching for that commanding arm and even as he did so he heard a warning whisper. *Joe, you watch your step.* Nolan's mind said, *The hell with that,* and his hand closed on Warham's arm.

The commander spun, one fist cocked, his mouth drawn thin. "I told you once I've had a bellyful of this—and you. Now—" and the fist caught Nolan backhanded across the mouth.

It did not hurt. Nolan was surprised at that. He saw the blood, though, dripping on his clenched right hand. He waited for the vessel's roll to give it weight, then threw the hand, dead center to Warham's classic jaw. The commander bounced once against the bulkhead, staggered, and went down. And Nolan raised his own hand then, waving the *Ariadne* on its way. Even at that distance relief was plain in Jaentz' bearing.

He called, "I'll be back! Hang on!"

Froth bubbled at the tender's counter, she quickly gathered way. In the driving spindrift and gathering darkness she disappeared almost at once.

ONLY then did Nolan turn. Warham was on his feet, fingers curled unbelievingly to his swelling jaw. He nodded, almost to himself and said, "It's good to find these things out. Nolan, you don't fit in with my future plans. That was evident from the first. This confirms it. In view of that, suppose you write out your resignation. I'll see that it goes through at once."

Strangely, Nolan felt no anger. That, he supposed, would come. He said wearily, "Fine. Meanwhile, what?"

Warham inched an eyebrow upward. "Why, I'm stuck here, as you pointed out, so I'll relieve you as of now." The curl was back on that upper lip. "I hardly think the duties will tax my experience or judgment. Do you agree?"

Nolan did not trust himself to speak. There was sudden sickness retching upward in his throat now that the initial shock was gone. He turned wearily away—

then stopped as he heard a whistle, wind-torn and distant, of an unseen steamer working toward them from the south. But it was not that that made him pause.

It was another sound, or lack of it. It hit him then, what was wrong, and he was running in great leaping strides toward the engine room companion, Warham, everything, forgotten.

McNab met him at the ladder's foot, straightening slowly from a dead auxiliary. "I know, Joe. The bell machine ain't been working for the last ten minutes. It's broke down—and ten years overdue, at that. And that ain't all." His face was like a chart of reef-ribbed waters as he gestured toward the main engine. "Listen!"

It was there beneath the engine's surface rhythm, a muffled pounding.

"Bearing!" NcNab wagged his head. "I got to shut down before too long, or I won't have nothin' left to fix."

Nolan said, "There's a steamer northbound, not far off. By the sound, she's too close in. How long will you be?"

"The bell machine, an hour, maybe. The main engine? Well, if my luck and the baling wire will hold—"

"An hour! Mac, that steamer will be on us in less than half of that. And she can't see a quarter mile! Look, we—"

McNab turned silently away and bent again to his task. That bowed back, the lack of speech, were eloquent. Nolan went silently, apologetically, back up the ladder.

He reached the bridge and looked out upon the smoking fury of the seas. It was still raining, with a savage driving persistence now, and the beacons overhead were only fuzzy halos in the murk, shedding their wan light upon the lonely acre of ocean that bounded the vessel. Visibility, now that night was on them, was little more than several shiplengths. The steamer, of course, should pass well to seaward, but would she? It was the practice, Nolan knew, of some skippers to hold a lightship dead ahead in thick weather, thereby fixing their exact position.

This, apparently, was the approaching vessel's intention, for her whistle grew alarmingly in volume. And she was coming fast. Too fast, perhaps, because. . . .

"The fool!" And that was Commander Warham stepping forward, disdain in that commanding voice. "Doesn't he know the regulations? Hell, he's making knots!"

Nolan did not answer. Sure, there were regulations covering this. All licensed seamen knew them. *In fog, mist or heavy rain, vessels shall go at moderate speed, having careful regard for existing circumstances.* . . . But like all rules, this was a matter of common sense, interpretation, mainly.

It was up to the steamer's skipper. After all, he had a lightship on his bow, with a submarine bell—and a whistle—to guide him. That made everything safe enough. Only now he had no bell, and Nolan doubted if the *Wreck's Reef's* old-fashioned chime could be heard very far to windward above the howling of the gale, the roar of breaking seas.

Warham, too, must have held the same doubts, for he said abruptly, "If he holds course he'll run us down like a sitting gull. He—"

The commander stopped.

Nolan saw the steamer then, a shapeless shadow, huge as an overhanging crag, bearing down on them from out the veil of night, coming fast, broad on their beam. He saw the superstructure taking shape, a freighter's outline, and the creaming wedge of water as the plunging bows drank deep and drooled. And high above, a running light winked wanly, red as a festered eye. Red! Great God, it had to be green if the vessel were to pass ahead.

"She isn't even swinging!" That was Warham's voice, cool disdain forgotten, shouting to the crewman forward. There were even shreds of panic clinging to it. "Forrud there! Cut loose!"

The steamer saw them now, and her whistle became a roar of warning, bass, staccato, as someone on her bridge slammed telegraphs to full astern. Staccato blasts—*Keep clear.* There was a laugh, if you had the stomach for it. Keep clear indeed! As if the *Wreck Reef* could! Why, she was anchored here, and the oncoming vessel was only a hundred yards or so away. Nolan knew that you did not stop, or even turn, ten thousand deadweight tons of ship in a mere hundred yards. Why, in a moment that towering destruction would be on them, into them, crushing their wooden hull like it was so much cardboard. Unless, somehow, the *Wreck Reef* could get out from under.

MAYBE Warham's instinctive action would accomplish that. Maybe. It was a thousand to one chance, but their only one. Nolan admitted that. Even if McNab's faltering engine failed, they might drift clear. Freed of her imprisoning cable, light and buoyant, the *Wreck Reef* would be swept to leeward like a cork, far faster than the heavy steamer. And after that? Well, that was a problem for the future. For the future, yes, but meanwhile what? The reef would be left unguarded, a death trap for blinded, trusting coastwise shipping. Nolan wondered if Warham had thought of that.

Not that it mattered to Nolan. He had an out; he was in the clear. Warham had assumed command—there were witnesses to that. Let Warham explain to some brass-bound investigation board why he had deserted his station in order to save himself. See how well that excuse stood up. Hell, it wouldn't. The board of Warham's peers would have his stripes for this and Nolan would be reaffirmed. That was fine; that was as it should be.

Nolan's near-smile never reached his lips, for a simple truth, ingrained for twenty years, was hammering at his brain. The *Wreck Reef's* place was here, no matter what. Sure, the *Wreck Reef's* crew, including Nolan, did little to earn their keep. Warham had been right in that. All that was asked of them, really, was to remain on station—even now, and pray the steamer would miss them. That was the one inviolate rule of the service.

Nolan saw all that, suddenly and very clearly, and he sighed and cupped his hands and shouted, "Forward there! Hold on!"

For all the seething dissension of his thoughts, it had been only seconds since Warham's first command. The crewman had not yet freed the chain for running, nor was the freighter on them. She was closer, sure, still carrying her inexorable way and. . . . Well, maybe she would miss them after all. But even as the hope recurred, Nolan knew it was no good. He stood there, breath forgotten, waiting for the shock of impact. And in the silence of that moment he heard the erratic rhythm of the engine, like it was the clock of doom ticking off the final seconds. Why, that meant McNab was still below! Why hadn't he scrambled upward to the deck with the others, ready to jump when the steamer struck? Nolan cursed himself. He should have known! McNab, too, knew his place, his station, and was remaining there until the end.

Nolan snatched up the speaking tube, wild warning crowding upward in his throat. "Mac! You—" It hit him then, in midsentence, that there might still be a chance. A thousand to one, perhaps, like Warham's gamble. No, a million to one, would be more like it—but it was still a chance, and he yelled, "Mac! Hook 'er up! Full ahead!"

His answer was immediate, the stepping up of the engine's stamping cadence as McNab opened the throttle wide. Nolan stood there, rigid, as the *Wreck Reef* made her long odds bid. She fought her way up the steep incline of a sea, overriding the anchor cable, clawing forward desperately, as if she guessed the price of failure. She reached a ragged crest and poised there, screw thrashing wildly. Nolan's heart took up the tempo and he closed his eyes, waiting for the sickening lurch that would mean they were tumbling backward down the comber's curling forward slope. It did not come. Instead the *Wreck Reef* put her blunt nose down, pitching forward, letting the sea pass under and astern. So, too, passed the freighter, but so close that the heat of her exhaust was like a dragon's breath.

Nolan opened his eyes and in the glow of the masthead beacons caught a fleeting glimpse of a figure on the freighter's bridge, slack-jawed and pale. Nolan thought that he himself must look the same. He. . . . But the steamer was gone then, as swiftly as she had appeared, turbines winding up, tuned to the tempo of the gale. She swung hard over, headed offshore into the curtain of the night.

Nolan saw the speaking tube still clutched in his shaking hand. "Mac—" he said, and the phleghm of fear was still thick in his throat. He tried again and got it out. "Mac, we're clear. Slow that antique down before it flies apart."

Only then did he think of Warham. The commander was clinging to the window coaming, exactly as if he never meant to let it go.

"Captain—" he began and, like Nolan,

(Continued on page 106)

ASK ADVENTURE

Information You Can't Get Elsewhere

ANYBODY got a cold dog?

Query: As it was my good fortune to live in there for two years, I am giving a program on Greenland, but need souvenirs with which to illustrate my lectures.

Perhaps you could also advise me where I would be able to purchase an Eskimo Sledge Dog. A self-addressed, stamped envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

Cordially yours,
Cecil Houghton
Director of Admissions
Olivet College
Michigan

Reply by Victor Shaw: Souvenirs from-or-of Greenland are very hard to find in the USA or even Canada, though I do know of one outfitter in New York City, who may have what you require. Try Anthony Fiala, at 25 Church Street. He outfitted many arctic expeditions, as well as Teddy Roosevelt's expedition to Paragua, S.A.

What you need would be fur clothing, kamicks, sealhide sleeping bags, or perhaps narwhal tusks—or walrus—kyack models, spears, harpoons, bows and arrows and so on.

I had all the above years ago, and you'd have been welcome to them at the turn of the century, but they've vanished long since. All I now have left is a miniature ivory seal carved by an Innuit from one of the walrus tusks I'd killed—*animal*, not the tusk!

I was on two of the Peary Expeditions, one in '97 and the other '99. Learned the native's language (only a working knowledge) but studied the habits, customs, superstitions, etc., being highly interested. A general summary was printed in *Adventure*. Can't locate a copy right now, but will send one to you if I should unearth it later.

Obtaining a Greenland husky dog is an even tougher job, so far as I know. It's fairly simple to get hold of a similar dog from the Labrador, but the north Greenland dogs are a different breed entirely, being larger and more untamable, and I believe many are a real cross with the arctic wolf. We had to tie each dog by its trace to some handy rock to keep 'em apart when feeding them.

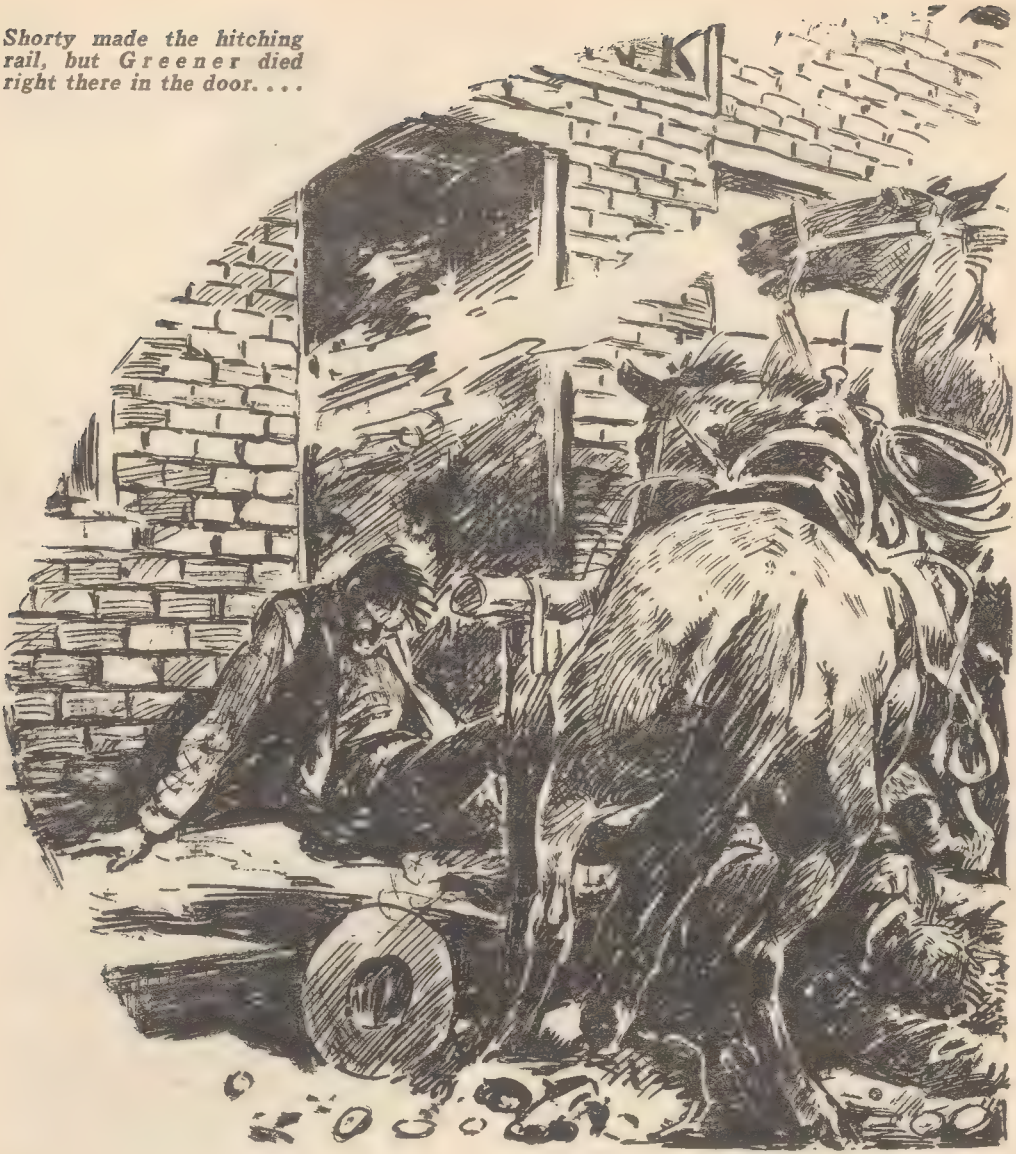
I do know that Peary took a few of the Labrador type up to his H.Q. at Etah in Smith Sound one year, but gave them up later as the Labrador type wouldn't stand the gaff like the native-bred species. I know that some of the lead-dogs weighed up to one hundred twenty-five pounds or more. And the average sledge dog behind the leader weighed around a hundred and up.

I could detail the sleeping bags lined with dogskin fur inside—or the kamicks, also with a sort of stocking inside, made of soft-tan dogskin. The outer kamick was soft-tan sealskin and the foot portion made of Ookjuk hide for the sole. These are waterproof, even in snowy slush.

However, maybe you already sabe that. And also do you know that most of the "Arctic Highlanders" can't count beyond the fifth digit? I ran into one who had the name for six—Akbenukbun. Beyond five or six, to describe a herd of caribou for example, they use the word "amasoaodly,"

(Continued on page 102)

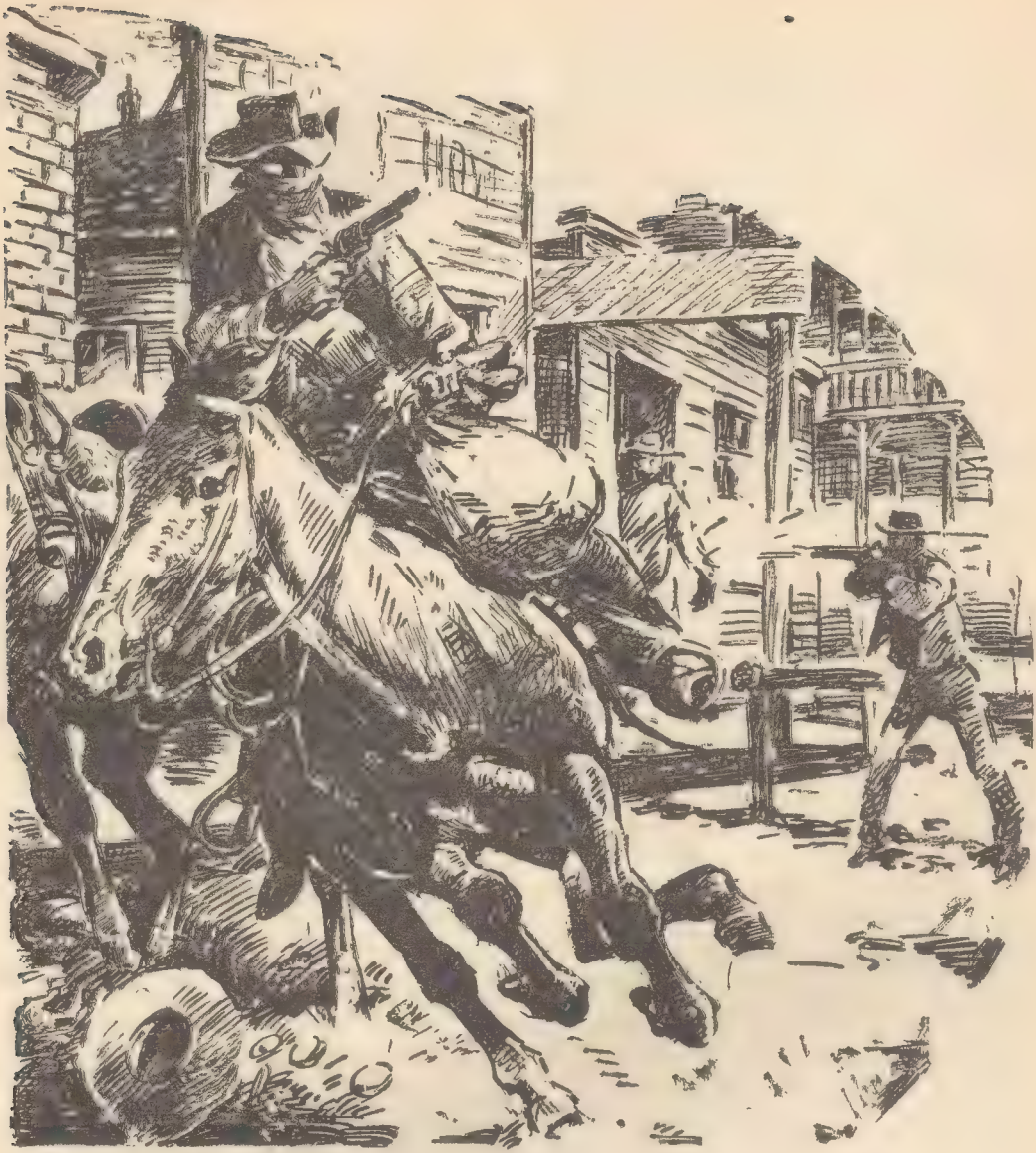
Shorty made the hitching rail, but Greener died right there in the door. . . .



KILLER'S DARK

By VERNE ATHANAS

There's no night as dark as the dark of a bullet—when Death throws the rule book away. . . .



THE wind had a sweep to it here, and the bite of coming winter as the sun slid behind the hills. It was hot in the days, but the nights knew, and they gave a man a taste of what was coming. Jess Lucey felt its chill as it dried the sweat under his shirt, and he shivered a bit, twisting in the saddle to look out over his back trail. There was sun out there yet, on the flats, even as he rode now in shadow. He had a moment of numb half-anger, and then he put his horse to the climb.

Ten thousand square miles, or better. Four towns, not totaling two thousand souls among them. A dozen scattered ranches, perhaps, and a few stage stations and roadhouses and line shacks and such, but mostly just miles of the empty land. One man doesn't bulk very large in such surroundings. One man could lose himself in it like a very small needle in a very large haystack.

It wasn't working out that way. He'd seen the rider in time, he thought, and he had pulled out to avoid meeting him. He

had looked back to see the rider cutting his trail, and that was bad. For the rider would know his track now, and he'd be able to say where and when if he was asked.

Again he had a moment of anger, and then he worked his shoulders in the chill dampness of his shirt and moved on. A little bragging thought came into his mind.

They didn't get me. Greener and Shorty they got, but not me. And they won't. Right down the middle of the whole damned town, and they never touched me. Now let 'em try to dig me out of the hills.

It was dry camp and cold camp. He picketed the horse with the shortened saddle rope, unsaddled, and rubbed the animal down with the saddle blanket, then shook out the blanket and saddled again, leaving the cinches loose. He had shaken them, he was sure, but only a damned fool took too many chances. Jess Lucey was nobody's fool, he assured himself.

He had one smoke before full dark came, and then he rolled himself up in the slicker that had been behind the saddle. A man can sleep middling warm in just a slicker if he does it right. Wrap it tight and even, and it holds in a lot of body heat.

Jess Lucey didn't sleep well. The lonesome dark can do something to a man, if he's got things on his mind. His sleep was a short doze, and a sudden waking, with ears and eyes tuned to highest pitch, then a slow slacking off and another doze.

Shorty and Greener and he in the cowtown bank. Everything going like soft butter till the fool clerk thought to be a hero and grabbed for a gun. Never believe one shot would make so much noise. The teller going down behind his little wicket window. Shorty and Greener backing out, and he following, weighted with a bag apiece in the hands that weren't holding guns. Then some fool cutting loose in the street with a rifle.

Shorty made the hitching rail, but Greener died right there in the door. Shorty yelling in his high tenor voice and wheeling as someone fired down the street. They'd collided there, both running, and gone down together. Shorty got only to his knees, then pitched over on his face. Jess rolling under the tie rail among the stamping legs of the spooked horses, snatching up the one bag he could see handy, yanking the rein loose, swinging into the saddle, running the gauntlet of spitting fire, with the ache of teeth clamped tight together and the gun bucking and roaring in his hand. He rode right out of town without a scratch.

The milksop kid, charging out of the hardware store with the big Sharps rifle, and the way his mouth gaped when the bullet hit him. He'd stumbled on nothing and pitched off the porch and the Sharps bellowed under him as he hit the ground. Jess found himself wondering if the barrel of the Sharps had blown up, going off that way with the muzzle jammed into the dust. Silly thing to wonder about. Get some sleep.

It was cold in the morning too, and the horse hadn't picked much feed. Jess tightened the cinches, and swung up. His spur scraped on the softly-clinking bag tied behind the cantle, and the anger came up again. Silver dollars.

Two men dead, and he on the dodge, and the one bag he'd salvaged held a lousy stinking hundred silver dollars. For a hundred silver dollars, he had Abel Bane on his trail, and was sleeping dry and cold. He made a disgusted sound in his throat and spurred the reluctant horse ahead.

"ROARK'S," they called the place, and Boze Roark owned and operated it. A stage stop once, it hung out still in the saddle of the mountains, offering meals of a sort, a few beds if you weren't too particular, and various staple supplies and horse feed, if you needed them and had the price. Nobody could accuse Boze Roark outright of dishonesty, but to Boze a dollar was a dollar, and he did not investigate its antecedents, being of an incurious and taciturn nature.

There was one horse tied in front of the satin-bleached boards of the place, and Jess clung to the shelter of the brush for an hour before its rider came out and rode on. Then Jess rode in. He tied the horse around the corner of the main building, on the side off the trail, and tramped into the big dim front room. Boze Roark came through a door and stopped at the short bar, both hands flat on the zinc top.

Roark's face had been molded thick and heavy out of a stiff dough and baked

brown and crusty. His eyes were set under his carelessly thumbed brows like two black raisins. He said nothing to Jess and he made no further movement.

Jess said with a heavy geniality, "Break out the best, Boze, and have a drink with me."

Roark's lips parted, and Jess almost expected to see his crusty brown cheeks crack in the movement. His voice was a coarse grumble, from deep in his thick chest.

"Get out of here," he said. "You damned fool."

Jess felt his grin fading, and he growled in startled amazement, "What the hell's biting on you?"

Roark stared at him with his dull black little eyes, and his voice grumbled at him again.

"Don't bring that gray wolf Bane on me, Lucey. Get out. That was Abel Bane's son you gunned down in town. He'll drive you till you drop, Lucey. That star on his chest don't mean a thing now. He'll follow you to hell, and he'll move a mountain to find you. Get out."

Jess felt the biting prickle of sweat come under his collar. The kid. The milksop kid with the Sharps. That had been Sheriff Abel Bane's son, and Boze Roark had named him right. Abel Bane was a gray wolf, a manhunter from the old days, and he and God alone knew where all those lay who had crossed his trail. Jess felt a chill that was more than the griping of an empty belly working under his ribs.

Jess Lucey could see the pattern shaping up and it was bad for him. Boze wasn't one to scare easy, but Abel Bane had the Injun sign on him, and Boze was going with what looked like the best play. Jess knew the rules of this game.

His practiced hand slid down and up and the .45 made a deep double metal click as he eared back the hammer.

"I'll have horse feed and grub and blankets and shells," he said, "and you can put the bill to Abel Bane. I'd have paid and left, and you'd never have seen me, but now you can go to hell."

Boze Roark's thick lips twisted to one side and he said in a sort of rumbling petulance, "Why pick on me, Lucey? Abel Bane has marked you for coup, and he'll know you've been here."

"Move, damn it!"

He made Boze walk out ahead of him, and kept him in sight while he lashed the stuff to the saddle. As an afterthought, he made Boze catch him another horse out of the corral behind the place, and he cursed Boze with a deadly fury when Boze missed his first cast with the rope. He swapped the saddle, swung up on the chunky bay, and he stopped at the corner of the place and looked down at Boze.

"I'll be riding this way again," he said. "Remember it when you talk to Abel Bane."

Boze tipped his big head back so that his black raisin eyes peered up from under his brows.

"You won't be back," he said.

ABEL BANE was there before the sun was an hour higher. He brought his big chestnut mount out of the brush, swung out into the trail, sent his eyes in a careless sweep up to the door of Roark's, and rode straight up to it. He swung down and came in, a thin gray blade of a man, gray in the mustache that curved down past the corners of his mouth, gray in the eyes that looked at a man like two polished granite chips.

There was no softness in him. The sun and the wind of this empty land had burned and flayed the weakness out of him. He knew the time here when the Indians had burned a wagon train, not half a mile from Roark's. He'd counted coup on the brave that led that bunch.

He had married late, to a woman but little more than half his age, and she had borne him one son before she died. It was the fierce, undemonstrative affection of an eagle that he gave his son, but the fact that he loved him was as plain as print. And he was the law in this land, the crude, horse-sense, eye-gouging, tooth-yanking justice kind of law that the land had to have. The silver star on his vest winked a bit of sunlight as he went in through the door of Roark's.

There was a code and a set of rules for this too.

Abel Bane asked quietly, "Jess Lucey been here?"

Boze Roark looked at him a moment in

silence, then slowly nodded his big head.

"How long?"

"'Bout an hour start on you. Took a horse and grub and shells." He did not add directions, for the rules of the game presupposed that the sheriff was a tracker and a manhunter.

"Obliged," said Abel Bane, and turned and walked to the door.

He stopped and turned back. "If Jess Lucey stops here again," he said, "and gets a bite of food, a horse, a single cartridge—I will burn this pigsty down around your carcass."

Boze Roark's lips parted, came tight again. His little black raisin eyes tried to hide under their sheltering brows. His lips parted again, but Abel Bane was gone.

JESS LUCEY made his plans as he rode. South and a little east, he had to go, for that was the way the hills lay. Westward, possibly, if the pressure got too bad, but not except as a final resort. There was water there, if a man knew where to find it, but men had died trying, and he did not know the country well. Not east, for out there were the infrequent ranches and riders—riders who scanned every track, simply because theirs was a hard and lonely life, and anything that broke the monotony of range-riding was something to classify and remember. North, and he was bottled in, for there were only two passes in the mountains for a rider. No, south and east it would be. Stick to the scrub and the rough ground and beat the gray wolf at his own game. Ride hard and sleep light and get out of the country with a whole hide and the hundred silver dollars. He cursed silently and touched up the bay with his spurs.

There was still a good two hours of sun left in the sky when the shot came. He was quartering down the steep slope of a draw, and was clear of the scrub for perhaps five seconds while he crossed the dry wash at the bottom. The bullet hit the metal rim of the cantle, took a half-inch gouge out of his thick leather belt and went screaming on out into the scrub of the opposite slope. In that one dismal instant, Jess Lucey knew that this one wasn't going to go by the rules.

The rules said that the lawman gave his man a chance, a choice—surrender or fight. The law put a gun on a man, told him in any one of the combinations of words that the game was called. But this bullet told Jess Lucey that the rule book was thrown away for this once. The gray wolf wanted eye and tooth and life for life, and the rules were gone to the fires of hell. But now Jess Lucey was in the brush again, and there was no second bullet.

There was a high, tight swelling in his throat and an ache along the length of his breastbone, an iron-hard tautness to his belly. The reaching plunge of the stout bay under him was a snail-like creep. He spurred savagely, and wanted to look back, but his shoulders were frozen in a peculiar stiffness, and he hunched low over the saddle horn, bowing his head to the lashing of the limbs of the scrub.

He drove the bay deep into a clump of live-oak and yanked him to a halt. The deep chesty breathing of the animal bellowed and shouted in his ears like thunder. He sat there a full minute, stiff and tall in the saddle, moving only his head, sounding the breeze, listening, listening, breathing shallowly and silently.

Little by little the stiffness went out of him as the silence reassured him. His fingers slacked away on the reins, and the bay tossed his head gratefully, and made a comfortable chirring noise with the bridle cricket in his mouth.

The sweat was chilling on its body, and it wanted to move. Jess took it out of the thicket at a walk and angled up slope. The scrub pine was releasing its hot sweet afternoon breath, a good and soothing scent, and somewhere out of sight a squirrel chittered and fell silent.

The bay chirped the cricket, moving the little milled bridle-bit roller on his tongue, and his hoofs made a muffled thudding on the woods mold.

Maybe I've dodged him, was Jess Lucey's thought. He came out to the last rocky spine of the ridge, where the rock slope threw the collected heat of the day back at him, and he pulled off to follow the line of it south, keeping to the fringe of the buck-brush and manzanita that came saddle high against him.

This was his game, and once he thought dimly, *I've been at this a long time,* and then he was buried in the alertness of all his senses, watching ahead and behind and to the sides.

FOR a moment, he had an almost resentful anger at the memory of the days he had traveled thus, quiet and aware, with the pressure of the man behind always on his shoulders. You couldn't shake it. Even on the times he'd ridden a straight trail, the infrequent jobs he'd held riding after another man's cattle or horses for wages. Even there you couldn't shake it. You noticed, before any of the others, when someone rode out of the dark to the fire. You got the habit of stowing your bedroll at the outer fringes of the light, an unconscious knowledge of where the horses were, and where the open going lay. A man did that, after he'd been hunted and shot at.

You got used to the way a hiring boss looked you over, a big man with the light-sleeping nights and the hard-riding days showing on your face. You got used to the way his eyes flicked over the gun, slung low on the thigh for quick use rather than riding ease, and you got used, finally, to the reluctance with which he hired you, for you didn't care much. There are easier ways to live than breaking your back for another man's profit.

For an instant, his thick lips twisted back from his strong yellow teeth. *Like robbing a bank for a hundred iron men,* his mind reminded him sardonically.

The light faded, and a little breeze came along the slope with the going of the sun, and he turned down slope, moving deeper into the scrub. He found a little grass swale, hemmed in by the scrub, where a little creek whispered and tinkled.

He sounded the air, mouth open to amplify any sound, and finally he moved the thirsty animal down to drink. He dragged off the heavy saddle, flipped out the damp blanket, threw it flat across a bush while he poured a quart of rolled oats into his hat. The bay thrust his nose deep into the oats and made eager crunching sounds.

Jess heard the hammer click quite plainly, and was already moving when the slug knocked him staggering sideways. The tightness was in his breast bone again, and he had only one thought: *Get away.* There was no hurt to where he had been hit; he had no thought to fight back. Flight filled his brain, was his only horizon.

He had the hackamore in his hand. He wrenched the bay's head around, pointed for the scrub, and he made a scrambling leap that got him astride bareback, bellied down, one hand twisted in the mane and the other with the hackamore rope. Another bullet spattered him with bark, and the scream of the ricochet was a thin sharp file on his shrinking nerves.

Then he was in the dark scrub, and the brush loomed out of the blackness to lash and snatch at him, and pain was coming at last. It came slowly, and built up to a sudden twist with iron fingers in the flesh of his side, and a cold sweat popped out on his forehead and under his arms.

He was suddenly sick and blind and the racking motion of the horse was tearing him to pieces. He made a deep gagging noise and dragged on the hackamore rope in a clutching frenzy. The slowing plunges of the bay all but unseated him. He rolled forward, pressing with his hand at his side, and he felt the coarse scratch of the mane against his face.

Little by little the sickness went, and he took a ragged breath finally, that was not caught half drawn by the pain. He straightened a little, and explored the wound with shrinking fingers. Not deep, but fairly long, and a spongy softness where the hard curve of a rib should be. He could not feel any bone splinters, so the bullet had but kissed the bone and gone on.

He started the bay forward again, holding his course, not daring to turn back now, and as he rode, he wadded his kerchief against the wound, pulled his shirt tails out and rolled them high and tied the tails in front of his belly. It helped, but it wasn't good, and he was backing his own trail, and the gray wolf was driving him.

He could feel the fever coming, by the heat within his mouth, and he knew without thinking on it, that the bay was wearing down on him. Abel Bane was behind him, but Bane was only human. He'd not track a man very fast in the dark. Push it. Get back to Roark's. Get a hat and a horse and some grub. Bane's alone. And he's only a man.

Take to the desert. Bane'll find it slow trailing, through that godforsaken mess of nothing. Get him off your back—get some sleep. Shake this damned country, with nothing but bad luck in it for you. Gig the spurs to the lagging bay. Got to move out of Roark's with a little time to spare.

ROARK'S loomed up in the pass, only the straight lines of its roof showing where it set out of the scrub. Not daylight yet. Jess felt his lips twist a little, even against the fire in his side. A little surge of warmth came to him. He'd beaten the gray wolf to it, by God.

He kept the bay to the thick pad of dust of the trail where it swung around the front porch of the place, and then he sent a soft hail up to the second story where the sleeping rooms were.

Boze Roark was a light sleeper. His bed groaned as he came out of it, and then his grumbling voice said, "Yeah?"

Jess called softly, "Who's here, Boze?"

Boze Roark's crusty grumble came again.

"Who wants to know?"

"Jess Lucey. I got to have a horse—"

Flame lashed at him, almost in his very face. The bay wheeled away and the snap it gave him as he gripped his thighs on the animal's barrel sent a knife of fire through him. His hand brought up the .45 even as he moved and he laid it on the window. It bucked and roared in his hand, and he heard the musical clash of breaking glass, and then he was driving the bay with urgent spurs as the rifle roared at him again.

He cursed in a sick, tired rage. A burning goad of anger said, *Go back. Shoot the place to pieces. Burn it down on top of him. Smash it. Smash Boze. Put a bullet through his thick guts, and laugh while he squirms. . . .*

Another thought said, *No time. Abel Bane is back there. He's only a man, but he's half Injun. Even in the dark, he's not far behind. Keep moving. He has not slept either. His horse will be fagged too. . . .*

He loaded the empty chambers in the cylinder by feel, and then he rode, hugging his belly so that his left elbow was braced against the wadding over his wound.

West now. Into the badlands and the desert. The word would be out now. The ranchers and the riders would know and they would be watching. The north passes too. And Abel Bane was behind him.

West then. The bay moved at a tired jog, racking him with the rough motion, but he dared not pull up and rest. Already, the sky was lightening overhead. Daylight would lay his trail before Abel Bane like an opened book. He licked his lips, and felt the roughness of the fever coming on them.

The sun came over the hills behind him, and its warmth was a comfort for a few minutes. Then the thin shell of the night's coolness cracked, and the heat began to bounce up off the flinty earth, and he began to feel the weight of it, and was suddenly reminded that he had no hat.

He kept to the low ground, the hard ground, never skylighting himself. Then the scrub petered out, and the coarse clumps of grass, and the only growth was a stubborn sage that clung among the hot rocks, dry and bone-hard, with scanty foliage that was as much black as green. Rocks and powdery dust for earth. The bay's hoofs stirred it, and it lifted in the air, fine as flour, moving with him, settling little by little, clinging to the folds of his clothing, sticking where his sweat seeped through. It made a bitter grittiness on his lips and on his red-edged lids, and it sparkled in little facets on the coarse mane of the bay. He looked up, and it hung above him, moving as he moved, and he knew it marked him.

Then he had to see his back trail. One little corner of his mind told him, *He's back there. He's coming, and I've got to know where. . . .* The bay stumbled, and fresh fire bloomed in his wound. He licked his lips, and the bitter dust gritted on his tongue. The bay stumbled again, and went nearly to its knees.

He jerked at the hackamore, and got the animal's head up, but again it stumbled, on a rock no bigger than an egg, and then stood, legs wide-braced, breathing shallowly and noisily. He sat long seconds before he understood, and then he slid down.

Played out. Nigh twenty-four hours since he'd first saddled the bay yesterday, and now it was played out. With the gray wolf Bane coursing his trail, following in his implacable silence, the bay was played out. Jess Lucey felt a great frenzied bubble of frustration coming in his belly.

He was afraid, and not ashamed of his fear. He knew Abel Bane; knew him without illusions, and he knew, without the slightest doubt, that Abel Bane would follow until he fell; and when he was fallen, he would crawl, for that was the mold in which Abel Bane was cast.

But so had Jess Lucey's mold been rough, and his schooling rougher. Without conscious thought, he played this game out.

A GREAT rock hulked close, at the junction of two gullies, and it cast a shade that was less hot than the open earth. He left the bay where it stood, and moved into the shade, feeling an almost instant relief from the sun.

He leaned against the rough warmth of the boulder for a moment, let his smarting lids come over the inflamed redness of his eyes. The urge to sleep came on him in a great numbing weight and he felt his knees sag as he let his weight rest on the stone.

Then the urgency of his position came on him again, and he scrubbed angrily at his eyes with a hard rough hand and drove himself out of the shade. He had to see.

The short scrambling climb over the heat of the rocks took all the breath out of him, and when he bellied out to where he could see, he was gasping the hot air deep into his lungs, and his mouth was as dry as cured leather. His tongue simply scrubbed his lips. There was no moisture in it. Then he spotted the dust, and his heart made a sudden great hammering in his chest. Somehow, he had known it would be there, but still it shook him. Abel Bane was there, and close.

How close? His inflamed eyes rebelled at the shimmer of heat that made this empty land twist and squirm as if the very rocks were alive. A mile. Five miles, maybe. Or nearer. Or farther. There was no reference point for the thin banner of floury dust that dipped and curtsied as the hot breeze played with it out there. He closed his eyes and opened them again, but the shimmer of heat was a tricky devil that would not let him see clearly.

He cocked his head and listened. The breeze made dry rattling sounds in the green-black growth. The rocks ticked and clicked. A little lizard made a frantic skittering run across the bake-oven rocks from one scrap of shade to another. He wasn't six inches long, the lizard, but even he was troubled to find shade. Jess Lucey felt the sun, a weight that could almost be measured, a beating of hot brazen clubs on his bare head. He cursed it with a dull hopelessness, and slowly retreated to where he could stand.

He found his spot, two rocks and a scrubby bush, where he could lie, partly shaded, and where the gully was under his eyes. He lay there, while the sun made its slow wheel, and the shade moved off his back, so that his shirt lay against his shoulders with a bitter burning. There was no coolness of sweat now. His hide was stiff and rough, and dry dust hung in the minute cracks of his dry fingers, and he could feel it crusted hard about the stiff wires of the two-day beard on his face.

Then Abel Bane came. Jess Lucey's ears caught the first faint click as an iron shoe spurned a rock in the gully. His lips fell away from his wide strong teeth as he opened his mouth to hear better. The butt of the .45 was almost unbearably hot as his fingers found it and brought it whispering from the sheath. He brought it up before him and rested the button of the ejector on a rock, lining the sights on the sound.

The horse was making its clip-clop among the stones now, and he cocked the .45, and squirmed to ease the dull hammering ache in his side.

Gray mustache. Gray hair. Hat and clothing a dusty gray. Sitting straight and tough and lean in the saddle, carbine balanced across the horn, hatbrim tipping as he scanned the floor of the gully, the walls, the sky. Closer, now, but the shade of the wide hat brim hiding the eyes. Jess shifted the gun, following him with the sights.

Seventy-five yards. Fifty. Thirty-five. Jess could see the eyes now, the gray granite chips, alert, alive, questing, deadly patient. He pulled the trigger.

IT MADE a jarring crash that shook his whole body. A rolling cloud of white cottony smoke boiled out before him, and through it he dimly saw the horse come down, saw the lean length of Abel Bane falling aside into the clutter of rock to the side.

Then the breeze took the smoke away, and he could see the horse give one convulsive kick and heard a deep-chested groan. The carbine lay in the clear, in the pebbles of the gully, and the hat of Abel Bane lay some ten feet away, tipped up at

(Continued on page 112)

ASK ADVENTURE EXPERTS

THE ASK ADVENTURE SERVICE is free, provided self-addressed envelope and FULL POSTAGE for reply are enclosed. Correspondents writing to or from foreign countries must enclose International Reply Coupons, which are exchangeable for stamps of any country in the International Postal Union. **Air Mail** is quicker for foreign service!

Send each question *direct* to the expert in charge of the section whose field covers it. He will reply by mail. **Do Not** send questions to the magazine, unless so indicated *(c/o Adventure)*. Explain your case sufficiently to guide the expert you question. The magazine does not assume any responsibility. **No Reply** will be made to requests for partners, financial backing or employment.

★*(Enclose addressed envelope with International Reply Coupon)*

SPORTS AND HOBBIES

American Folklore and Legend: *Songs, Dances, regional customs; African survivals, religious sects; voodoo*—HAROLD PREECE, c/o *Adventure.*

Archery—EARL B. POWELL, c/o *Adventure.*

Auto Racing—WALT WOESTMAN, 2310 Midlothian Drive, Altadena, Calif.

Baseball—FREDERICK LIEB, c/o *Adventure.*

Basketball—STANLEY CARHART, 99 Broad St., Mattawan, N. J.

Big Game Hunting in North America: *Guides and equipment*—A. H. CARHART, c/o *Adventure.*

Boxing—COL. JOHN V. GROMBACH, c/o *Adventure.*

Camping and Outdoor Cookery—PAUL M. FINK, Jonesboro, Tenn.

Canoeing—H. S. M. KEMP, 501 10th St., E., Prince Albert, Sask., Canada.

Coins and Medals—WILLIAM L. CLARK, American Numismatic Society, Broadway at 156th, N. Y. C.

Fencing—COL. JOHN V. GROMBACH, c/o *Adventure.*

Fishing, Fresh Water—*Fly and bait casting; bait casting outfits; fishing trips*—JOHN ALDEN KNIGHT, 929 W. 4th St., Williamsport, Penna.

Fishing, Salt Water: *Bottom fishing, surf casting; trolling; equipment and locations*—C. BLACKBURN MILLER, c/o *Adventure.*

Fly and Bait Casting Tournaments—"CHIEF" STANWOOD, East Sullivan, Maine.

Globetrotting and Vagabonding—NORMAN D. FORD, c/o *Adventure.*

Hiking—DR. CLAUDE P. FORDYCE, c/o *Adventure.*

Horses and Horsemanship—JOHN RICHARD YOUNG, c/o *Adventure.*

Lost Treasure: *Tales of lost mines and treasure*—RAYMOND DOW, 2922 164th St., Flushing, N. Y.

Motor Boating—GERALD T. WHITE, Montville, N. J.

Motorcycling: *Regulations, mechanics, racing*—CHARLES M. DODGE, c/o *Adventure.*

Rifles, Pistols, Revolvers: *American and foreign*—ROY S. TINNEY, Brielle, N. J.

Shotguns: *American and foreign; wing shooting and field trials; gunsmithing*—ROY S. TINNEY, Brielle, N. J.

Skiing—WILLIAM C. CLAPP, The Mountain Book Shop, North Conway, N. H.

Small Boating and Cruising: *Skiffs, sailboats, powerboats, outboards*—COL. ROLAND BIRNN, c/o *Adventure.*

Songs of Campfire, Foc'sle and Bunkhouse—HARRY KIRBY MCCLINTOCK, 3911 So. Pacific Ave., San Pedro, Calif.

Swimming—LOUIS DEB. HANDLEY, 115 West 11th St., N. Y., N. Y.

Track—JACKSON SCHOLZ, R. D. No. 2, Doylestown, Pa.

Woodcraft—PAUL M. FINK, Jonesboro, Tenn.

Wrestling—MURL E. THRUSH, New York Athletic Club, 59th St. and 7th Ave., N. Y., N. Y.

SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL SUBJECTS

Anthropology: *American, north of the Panama Canal; customs, dress, architecture, pottery and decorative arts, weapons and implements, fetishism, social divisions*—ARTHUR WOODWARD, Los Angeles Museum, Exposition Park, Los Angeles, Calif.

Entomology: *Insects and spiders; venomous and disease-carrying insects*—DR. S. W. FROST, 465 Foster Ave., State College, Penna.

Forestry, North American: *The U. S. Forestry Service, our national forests, conservation and use*—A. H. CARHART, c/o *Adventrue.*

Forestry, Tropical: *Tropical forests and products*—WM. R. BARBOUR, care of U. S. Forest Service, Glenn Bld., Atlanta, Ga.

Herpetology: *Reptiles and amphibians*—CLIFFORD H. POPE, c/o *Adventure*.

Horology: *The science of time and timekeepers*—JOHN W. MCGRATH, 434 W. 120th St., N. Y., N. Y.

Mining, Prospecting, and Precious Stones: *Anywhere in North America, Prospectors' outfitting; any mineral, metallic or non-metallic*—VICTOR SHAW, c/o *Adventure*.

Photography: *Outfitting, work in out-of-the-way places; general information*—PAUL L. ANDERSON, 36 Washington St., East Orange, N. J.

Radio: *History, operation, broadcast, short wave; Television*—DONALD MCNICOL, c/o *Adventure*.

Railroads: *In the United States, Mexico and Canada*—R. T. NEWMAN, 701 N. Main St., Paris, Ill.

Sawmilling: HAPSBURG LIEBE, c/o *Adventure*.

MILITARY, NAVAL AND POLICE

United States Army—COL. R. G. EMERY, U.S.A. Ret., c/o *Adventure*.

United States Coast Guard—LIEUT. C. B. LEMON, U.S.C.G., Ret., Box 221 Equimunk, Wayne Co., Penna.

United States Navy—FRANK HEROLD, 1647 Charon Rd., Jacksonville, Fla.

Merchant Marine—KERMIT W. SALYER, c/o *Adventure*.

Military Aviation—O. B. MYERS, c/o *Adventure*.

Federal Investigation Activities—*Secret Service, Immigration, Customs, Border Patrol, etc.*—FRANCIS H. BENT, c/o *Adventure*.

The French Foreign Legion—GEORGE C. APPELL, c/o *Adventure*.

Royal Canadian Mounted Police—H. S. M. KEMP, 501 10th St., E., Prince Albert, Sask., Canada.

State Police—FRANCIS H. BENT, c/o *Adventure*.

GEOGRAPHICAL SUBJECTS

★**New Guinea**—L. P. B. ARMIT, c/o *Adventure*.

★**New Zealand, Cook Island, Samoa**—TOM L. MILLS, 41 Bowen St., Feilding, New Zealand.

★**Australia**—ALAN FOLEY, 243 Elizabeth St., Sydney, Australia.

★**South Sea Islands**—WILLIAM MCCREADIE, Taylor Memorial Home, 79 Lagoon St., North Narrabeen, N.S.W., Australia.

Hawaii, Christmas, Wake, Canton, Midway and Palmyra Islands—CARL J. KUNZ, 211-3 Naska, Kahului, Maui, T.H.

Africa, Part 1 ★*Libya, Morocco, Egypt, Tunis, Algeria, Anglo-Egyptian Sudan*—CAPT. H. W. EADES, 3808 West 26th Ave., Vancouver, B. C. **2** *Abyssinia, Italian Somaliland, British Somali Coast Protectorate, Eritrea, Uganda, Tanganyika, Kenya*—GORDON MACCREAGH, c/o *Adventure*. **3** *Tripoli, Sahara caravans*—CAPTAIN BEVERLY-GIDDINGS, c/o *Adventure*. **4** *Bechuanaland, Southern Africa, Angola, Belgian Congo, Egyptian Sudan and French West Africa*—MAJOR S. L. GLENISTER, c/o *Adventure*.

Madagascar—RALPH LINTON, Dept. of Anthropology, Columbia University, N. Y., N. Y.

Asia, Part 1 ★*China, Japan, Hong Kong*—THOMAS BOWEN PARTINGTON, Constitutional Club, Northumberland Ave., London, W. C. 2, England. **2** ★*Siam, Malay States, Straits Settlements, Java, Sumatra, Dutch East Indies, Ceylon*—V. B. WINDLE, Box 813, Rancho Santa Fe, Calif. **3** *Persia, Arabia*—CAPTAIN BEVERLY-GIDDINGS, c/o *Adventure*. **4** *Palestine*—CAPTAIN H. W. EADES, 3808 West 26th Ave., Vancouver, B. C. **5** *Afghanistan, Northern India, Kashmir, Khyber Pass*—ROLAND WILD, Savage Club, 1 Carlton House Terrace, London, S.W.1, England.

★**The British Isles; Gibraltar, Malta and Cyprus**—THOMAS BOWEN PARTINGTON, Constitutional Club, Northumberland Ave., London, W. C. 2, England.

South America, Part 1 *Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Chile*—EDGAR YOUNG, c/o *Adventure*.

West Indies—JOHN B. LEFFINGWELL, c/o *Adventure*.

Baffinland and Greenland—VICTOR SHAW, c/o *Adventure*.

★**Newfoundland**—CAPT. LEO C. MURPHY, J. P., Great War Veterans' Office, St. John's, Newfoundland.

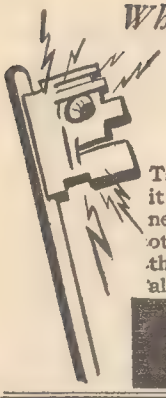
Mexico, Part 1 *Northern Border States*—J. W. WHITEAKER, 2903 San Gabriel St., Austin, Tex. **2** ★*West Coast beginning with State of Sinaloa; Central and Southern Mexico, including Tabasco, Chiapas, Campeche, Quintana, Roo and Yucatan*—WALLACE MONTGOMERY, Central Sanaloua, S. A., Costa Rica, Sinaloa, Mexico.

Canada, Part 1 ★*Southeastern Quebec*—WILLIAM MACMILLAN, 89 Laurentide Ave., Quebec, Canada. **2** ★*Southern Ontario*—HARRY M. MOORE, 579 Isabella, Pembroke, Ont., Canada. **3** ★*Northern Saskatchewan; Indian life and language, hunting, trapping*—H. S. M. KEMP, 501 10th St., E., Prince Albert, Sask., Canada. **4** ★*Yukon, British Columbia, Northwest Territories, Alberta, Western Arctic*—PHILIP H. GODSELL, F. R. G. S., 531 A. 15th St., South, Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada.

Alaska—PHILIP H. GODSELL, F. R. G. S., 531 A. 15th St., South, Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada.

Western U. S. Part 1—*Pacific Coast States*—FRANK WINCH, c/o *Adventure*. **2** *New Mexico; Indians, etc.*—H. F. ROBINSON, 1412 West Fruit, Albuquerque, New Mexico. **3** *Nevada, Montana and Northern Rockies*—FRED W. EGELSTON, P. O. Box 297, Elko, Nev. **4** *Idaho and environs*—R. T. NEWMAN, 701 N Main St., Paris, Ill. **5** *Arizona, Utah*—C. C. ANDERSON, 2940 East Brill St., Phoenix, Ariz. **6** *Texas, Oklahoma*—J. W. WHITEAKER, 2903 San Gabriel St., Austin Tex.

Eastern U. S., Part 1 *Maine*—"CHIEF" STANWOOD, East Sullivan, Me. **2** *Vt., N. H., Conn., R. I., Mass.*—HOWARD R. VOIGHT, P.O. Box 716, Woodmont, Conn. **3** *Chesapeake Bay and tributaries; inland waterways, New York to Florida*—COL. ROLAND BIRNN, c/o *Adventure*. **4** *Ala., Tenn., Miss., N. C., S. C., Fla., Ga.*—HAPSBURG LIEBE, c/o *Adventure*. **5** *The Great Smokies and Appalachian Mountains south of Virginia*—PAUL M. FINK, Jonesboro, Tenn.



When **NERVOUS TENSION MAKES YOU ALL "KEYED-UP"**

Take Miles Nervine to relax. See how it can soothe and comfort "jangled" nerves. Contains no Barbiturates nor other habit forming drugs. Follow the label. Avoid excessive use. At all drugstores.

MILES NERVINE

Long View Binoculars

UP TO 18 MILE RANGE

Guaranteed perfect precision ground lenses. Sturdy construction. Focus is adjustable to your own eye-strength. Thirty Millimeter objective. 10-day money-back-guarantee SEND CHECK or MONEY ORDER FOR $2.98 and we prepay postage. Or sent C.O.D. and you pay postage charges. CASE and STRAP $1.00 Extra. **$2.98**

DELUXE MODEL 42 MM $3.98

DOMAR SALES CO.

480 Lexington Ave. Dept. 397 New York 17, N. Y.

High School Course at Home

Many Finish in 2 Years

Go as rapidly as your time and abilities permit. Course equivalent to resident school work — prepares for college entrance exams. Standard H. S. texts supplied. Diploma. Credit for H. S. subjects already completed. Single subjects if desired. High school education is very important for advancement in business and industry and socially. Don't be handicapped all your life. Be a High School graduate. Start your training now. Free Bulletin on request. No obligation.

American School, Dept H949, **Drexel at 58th, Chicago 37**

COLT FRONTIER REVOLVERS

Over one hundred in Stock

BARGAIN PRICES!

Send 50c for the All New Beautiful Up to Date Catalog #2. Price of Catalog applied to first purchase.

HY. HUNTER 5666 W. 3rd St., Dept. 1-12 Los Angeles 26, Calif.

DO YOU HAVE PROSTATE TROUBLE?

General Weakness, Backache, Frequency, Burning Urination, Kidney and Bladder Distress.

The Kansas City Medical Press has just published a revealing booklet which discusses the PROSTATE GLAND in language anyone can understand. Information contained in this book may save you years of suffering. Give name and address.

MAIL COUPON TODAY

K. C. Medical Press
Dept. T-1, 1440 E. 21st,
North Kansas City, Mo.

Please send me by return mail booklets I have checked below.

The Prostate Gland ☐ Arthritis ☐
High Blood Pressure ☐ Rupture ☐
Please enclose 10c for each book ordered.

(Continued from page 91)

as close as I can spell it phonetically. I imagine you know this though. I traveled with the Nugumiut tribe in Baffinland, while collecting animal bird and flora groups for the N. Y. Museum of Nat'l History. Am interested in your lecture, and hope to hear from you again.

LOADED for bear—and patience.

I have in the past done some hunting in Oregon, but have moved to Washington. If you could tell me two or three grounds for deer and elk, I would greatly appreciate it. Would also like to know the best method of hunting black bear without the aid of dogs.

James J. Reed
Camas, Washington

Reply by A. H. Carhart: You have two, possibly three, types of deer in Washington. The Columbian black-tail, of course, is west of your location, in the mountain ranges west of the Olympia-Portland highway. Mule deer would be found eastward of this general line, and it is just possible if you wished to go up in Pend Oreille and Stevens counties you might get a whack at the large Western white-tail deer. There are considerable numbers of these in upper Idaho and western Montana.

The country northeast of your town, centering around Mount Adams, with the several spur mountain ranges reaching out from Adams, should be good deer country. And all the cascade range from there north, particularly the eastern side, should be good mule deer country.

Hunting bears without trail dogs is mostly a matter of luck. They are so cagey you just don't have much chance. If you have a lot of time to put in, you can locate where a bear or bears are running, and if there is an old dead carcass they're feeding on, set yourself and wait, or patiently prowl the area. To try to bag a bear in any western mountains, on foot or even with horses, is a time-demanding job. Tracking helps—so does knowing where the animals are running. But they roam, they're keen of eye and quick to pick up scent. That kind of bear hunting is a slow process.

A NOTE to Mr. Brock—we might be interested in your trip. Drop us a line if you run into anything *Adventure* might use.

Would you please give me some information on the following:

I have a small sail boat (38 ft) that I intend to sail to the West Indies and perhaps the South Pacific. I've heard a lot about island trading not being profitable

(Continued on page 104)

SAVE GAS . . Up to 1 Gallon in Every 4

install a

MILE-O-METER

and motor tune-up gauge

Up to 35 Miles Per Gallon

Mile-O-Meter is genuine mileage gauge as well as motor tune-up and motor vent important in running your car economically.

For all cars. Permanently mounted. Checks Spark Plugs. Carburetor adjustment for proper mixture. Shows how to maintain the top motor at every speed. Helps to eliminate dashpot use. Easy To Read Dial. No hard to read. Mounting over the dash or windshield brackets. No expensive removal. Complete instructions and 16-page mileage book included. Tested and proved by leading Automotive Associations and manufacturers. Makes a perfect gift. (Beautifully gift wrapped at no charge.) Over 1,000,000 in use today.

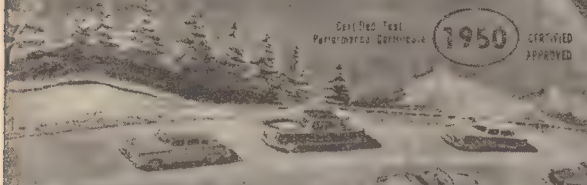
Send for yours, today — Mile-O-Meter shipped prepaid — money back guarantee

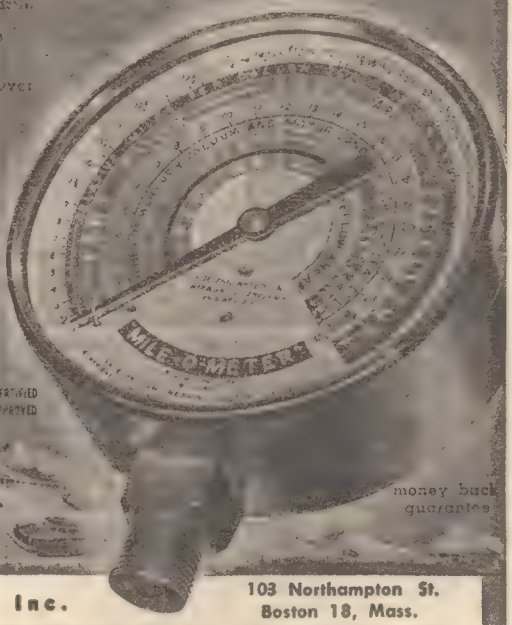
Deluxe Chrome Model 3½ Dia. . . . . $14.95 Ppd.

Standard Model 2½ Dia. . . . . $9.75 Ppd.

Fed. Tax Incl.

Mile-O-Meter will tell you how to correct the ENGINE CONDITION





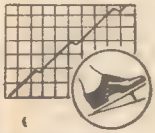
money back guarantee

Mfd. by **GALE HALL ENG., Inc.**

103 Northampton St.
Boston 18, Mass.

1. TEACHES you how to drive economically — eliminates the Jack Rabbit starts and passing on hills — that's where you really drink up fuel.

3. YOU can check your engine condition at all times, and if it is not operating efficiently, Mile-O-Meter will tell you how to correct the condition.



2. PERFORMANCE charts and suggestions are enclosed with every meter, enabling you to determine how many miles per gallon you are getting, and what adjustments to make to increase your mileage.

4. SIMPLY mount meter on windshield frame or on dashboard area to suit your convenience with the aid of mounting brackets that can be bent into practically any position.

DON'T DELAY
ORDER TODAY
FOR
IMMEDIATE DELIVERY

From

Gale Hall Engineering, Inc.
Boston 18, Mass.
103 Northampton Street

Mile-O-Meters Ship Prepaid

World's Largest Producer of Tune-Up Gauges

©1951 Gale Hall Engineering, Inc.

MEN PAST 40

Too Often Neglect Indications of ILL HEALTH

Watch yourself for unusual aches and pains. Such disturbances as pains in back, hips and legs, unusual tiredness, nervousness, dizziness, physical inability or sleeplessness often may be traced to glandular inflammation.

The Excelsior Institute, a medical institution devoted exclusively to the treatment of diseases of older men, has a revealing FREE Book. It tells how many hundreds of men yearly are finding soothing and comforting relief from their ailments and a new outlook on life. This FREE Book gives factual knowledge that could prove of utmost importance in the later years of your life. No Obligation. Address

Excelsior Institute, Dept. 7701, Excelsior Springs, Mo.

LEOPARD SEAT COVERS

TO FIT ALL AUTOMOBILES!

● Choice of full front and rear seat covers or split front seat. ● Leopard skin effect on colorful plastic. ● Water-proof and Stain proof. ● Comfortable and Cool ● Easy to attach—elastic ties hold securely. You must be satisfied or Money Back! Front or rear seat only $2.98 each or FULL SET for $5.00. Order now. Enclose payment or pay postman plus postal charges. Specify type A or B. MARDO SALES CO., Dept. 399, 480 Lexington Ave., New York 17, N. Y.

Learn Profitable Profession in 90 days at Home

MEN AND WOMEN, 18 to 60. Many Swedish Massage graduates make big money! Large full time incomes from doctors, hospitals, sanatoriums, clubs or private practice. Others made good money in spare time. Prepare for future security by training at home and qualifying for Diploma. Anatomy charts and 32-page Illustrated Book FREE!

The College of Swedish Massage
Dept. 195-R, 41 E. Pearson, Chicago 11

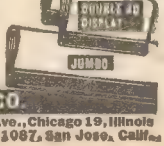
FREE—Amazing Book on RHEUMATISM, ARTHRITIS

If you suffer the aches, pains and discomforts of Rheumatism, as manifested in ARTHRITIS, NEURITIS, SCIATICA or LUMBAGO, send today for the FREE Book. It reveals important facts about why drugs and medicine give only temporary relief without removing causes. Explains fully a proven, specialized system of treatment that may save you years of distress. No obligation. Write for this FREE Book today!
BALL CLINIC, Dept. 16, Excelsior Springs, Mo.

MAKE EXTRA MONEY

EVERY BUSINESS EVERYWHERE USES UNION LABEL BOOK MATCHES

No experience needed to earn big daily commissions. Be a direct factory representative of the world's largest exclusive UNION LABEL Book Match manufacturer. Prospects everywhere. Feature Glamour Girls, Hillbillies, scenics and dozens of other styles—Double Books—Jumbo Books—nearly 100 color combinations. New, bigger portfolio makes this fastest selling line a real profit maker for you. Write TODAY for full details.



SUPERIOR MATCH CO.
Dpt. S-1251, 7528 S. Greenwood Ave., Chicago 19, Illinois
West Coast Salesmen, write Box 1087, San Jose, Calif.

(Continued from page 102)

any more, but couldn't a person make enough to simply live and sail? What would be a good spot to start in this trade and what would be the best way to go about it? What type of cargo? I would like to call at the least known and least visited places. I know there are many such, but could you list me a few? How about photography in out-of-the-way places, as a means of working my way. I have spent five years in the Pacific and Far East, both in the service and as a civilian, so I know what it is like.

William Brock
Newark, N. J.

Reply by Norman D. Ford: Making a living on a small boat cruising 'round the West Indies can be something of a problem. Actually, it can only be solved by the person involved in each individual case. But if you pursue certain lines of endeavor opportunities are likely to occur.

Your boat is too small for you to earn much money carrying cargo, but you might be able to take a few passengers occasionally between islands. On the other hand, a better proposition would be to charter your boat out from such resorts as Miami, Havana or Jamaica with yourself as crew.

Best of luck and don't forget to have a good copper sheathing or copper paint job below the waterline—otherwise the toredo worms will make short work of your ship.

HARKING back to the days when it was legal for you to make money.

Could you please tell me if there were ever any coins made by the Higley family in Vermont. I don't know the dates but it was when private families made money in the states. Could you also tell me where I might purchase one of these coins.

P.F.C. George A. Higley, USMC
Camp Lejune, N. C.

Reply by William L. Clark: The Higley family had nothing to do with the coinage of Vermont. However, a John Higley struck copper coins for Connecticut at Granby, which is near Hartford.

From 1737 to 1739, inclusive, John Higley, a copper mine owner of Granby, Connecticut, struck copper tokens for local use to supplement the few minor coins in circulation. The copper he used was so pure that his pieces soon wore smooth and specimens in excellent conditon are difficult to find.

All of these coins are quite rare, and I doubt if you would be able to pick one up in good condition for less than seventy-five dollars, and possibly more than a hundred dollars.

NOW, the pipe smoker's dream come true!

Every Pipeful Proves . . .

DR. PHILIP'S PIPE IS THE BEST!

The ideal pipe for the STEADY SMOKER, the NEW SMOKER and the man who doesn't like an ordinary pipe.

- NO BREAKING IN!
- READY-MADE CAKE!
- DOUBLE COOLING ACTION!
- CANNOT BURN THROUGH!
- FEATHER-WEIGHT!
- FLAT BASE, WILL NOT TIP!
- FINEST QUALITY IMPORTED BRIAR!
- INTERCHANGEABLE CERAMIC FILTER BOWLS!

This cross section shows the interchangeable inner ceramic bowl which burns tobacco dry, cool and clean. The bowl acts as a non-burning sponge that absorbs all of the tar and most of the nicotine. The metal radiator ring on top of the Dr. Philip's pipe is the only part that can get hot. It takes the heat from the ceramic and gives it off to the air FAST. The smoke circulates in the space between the inner bowl and the outer briar shell, becoming COOL before you draw it. Your tobacco cannot get wet because cotton or paper tissue packed in the space below the inner bowl absorbs all of the saliva and condensation. Rotate the ceramic bowls over and over again as you would a set of ordinary pipes. Dr. PHILIP'S pipe is EASY to CLEAN. There is no need to knock this pipe against any object to get out the ash. It does not form a cake. There is no need to rest the Dr. PHILIP'S pipe for cooling or drying. It has a constant capacity. The SHORT SMOKE MODEL will hold enough tobacco for a pleasure packed smoke of 15 to 25 minutes and the LONG SMOKE MODEL will last from 45 minutes to a full hour!

THE LONGER LASTING PIPE—YOU GET 4 EXTRA BOWLS!

SHORT SMOKE MODEL
Including 4 EXTRA BOWLS **only $4.50**

LONG SMOKE MODEL
Including 4 EXTRA BOWLS **only $5.50**

If not satisfied that this is the most amazing pipe you have ever owned, return within ten days and your money will be refunded!

QUALITY AGENCY
270 Park Avenue
New York 17, New York

Please send me postpaid .....DR. PHILIP'S pipe(s). I enclose $.....to cover the cost of the pipe(s) I have checked below.

☐ SHORT SMOKE MODEL including 4 EXTRA BOWLS @ $4.50
☐ LONG SMOKE MODEL including 4 EXTRA BOWLS @ $5.50

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

CITY..... ZONE....STATE.....
(Sorry, no C.O.D.'s) 12-51

PORTABLE GARAGE

$8.95 HEAVY GAUGE $10.95 EXTRA HEAVY GAUGE

USE IT ANYWHERE!

● Goes wherever your car goes ● Folds compactly ● Keeps rain, snow, dust, salt air, sun or sleet away ● Will withstand Extreme cold without cracking and protects your car's finish ● Perfect for storage of Cars, Furniture, Machinery Equipment ● Durably constructed of clear transparent—heavy gauge vinyl plastic that is long wearing and tough ● Spring-tite elasticized bottom, holds securely in all kinds of weather ● Fits all makes and models ● Direct from manufacturer ● Enclose check or money order, or sent C.O.D.

MARDO SALES CORP.
Dept. 398, 480 Lexington Ave., New York 17, N. Y.

Free for Asthma

If you suffer with attacks of Asthma and choke and gasp for breath, if restful sleep is difficult because of the struggle to breathe, don't fail to send at once to the Frontier Asthma Company for a FREE trial of the FRONTIER ASTHMA MEDICINE, a preparation for temporary symptomatic relief of paroxysms of Bronchial Asthma. No matter where you live or whether you have faith in any medicine under the sun, send today for this free trial. It will cost you nothing.

FRONTIER ASTHMA CO. 406-J FRONTIER BLDG.
462 NIAGARA ST. BUFFALO 1, N. Y.

SEND FOR THIS FREE!

Make money. Know how to break and train horses. *Write today for this book FREE*, together with special offer of a course in Animal Breeding. If you are interested in Gaiting and Riding the saddle horse, check here ( ) *Do it today—now.*

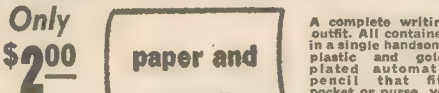
BEERY SCHOOL OF HORSEMANSHIP
Dept. 8412 Pleasant Hill, Ohio

EXCHANGE NECKTIES! Send us 5 ties in good condition that you dislike. We'll mail you 5 different cleaned ties we received from someone else. Then you pay postman $1.00 plus postage. If you indicate color or style preference, we'll try to satisfy. **TIE-X-CHANGE, 5458 N. 5th ST., PHILADELPHIA 20, PA.**

MEM-O-RITER

Only $2.00 *New! Handy!*

paper and pencil in one!



A complete writing outfit. All contained in a single handsome plastic and gold-plated automatic pencil that fits pocket or purse, yet it holds 36 inches of memo paper. A flick of the cap and the paper appears. Tear it off and you're ready to write!

ORDER NOW—only $2 each, plus 15c for postage and handling. Refills—set of 6 rolls, 25c. (On pre-paid orders add 15c for postage and mailing.) If not satisfied, return within 10 days and your money will be refunded.

QUALITY AGENCY
270 Park Avenue, New York 17, N. Y.

(Continued from page 90)

stopped, then tried again. "Captain, that was real seaman's judgment. And quick thinking."

If you only knew, Nolan thought. But Warham was continuing, having a hard time with his words. "I've been wrong about several things, it seems. Cutting loose from that anchor, say. A bad mistake in judgment. I see that now. And that's not all. I—I—" He seemed to be choking on the words.

Nolan set himself for a wait.

But the commander got it out then, quickly, in a rush of words. "I—I think it best that we forget that resignation matter. Do you agree?" He smiled, the relief of having it over plain on his handsome face. Then, "We'll be here for a while?"

Nolan felt an inward smile working in himself. "That's a sure bet," he said, then added: "Provided, of course, the weather betters. And that McNab can make repairs. And that the mooring gear holds out. And—" He stopped, looking beyond the other, past the *Wreck Reef's* plunging rail. The rain had stopped, and there was a break in the overcast with faint starshine leaking through. Even the wind showed signs of hauling into the west where it belonged. It seemed, too, as if they were laboring less.

He was sure of it then, as Warham started toward his room.

"Captain, I've a lot of sleep to catch up on. Call me when the tender comes alongside. I won't trouble you till then." He shut the door behind him.

Nolan stared blankly at it, something in the other's words still puzzling him. It was as if he had heard it all before. *Sleep to catch up on.* He had it then. The freighter's mate, of course, a squat man with close-cropped hair, jaws agape and unspeaking as he leaned tensely on the steamer's rail. He had spoken, though, Nolan recalled, back there on the dock in Bayport. Warham's words exactly, though with embellishments.

A voyage to nowhere. A month warming your rump. No trouble, no nothin'. There's the way to go to sea!

The inward smile broke free at last across Nolan's haggard face. Maybe the man had a point at that. Anyway, time would tell.

YOUR CHOICE OF TWO GREAT BOOKS

RUN FOR YOUR LIFE by James Whittaker
(Published at $3.50)

This is a novel which tells how a person becomes a criminal. It's the story of a girl named Jessie Meadowbrook, who loved wisely and too well.

Some people in town tried to cover for Jessie, but more of them tried to punish her. The incident mushroomed, threatening to expose the local gambling business and ruin a mayor. Some of the best people in town were involved. So they ran Jessie out of town. It was hard to tell afterward who was to blame for what happened, but it was Jessie who went to jail for murder.

This is a powerful Dreiserian novel full of sharply edged pictures of complex characters. There's a priggish Sunday-school teacher who never heard of mercy and forgiveness; a hard-bitten and racy Nurse Kinsey in the off-color establishment where Jessie's baby is born. James Whittaker has written with honesty and compassion about people who seldom encounter honesty or compassion.

OR

SIX SECONDS A YEAR by Frederick Laing
(Published at $3.00)

Some of the enthusiastic advance comments on this brilliant first novel:

Burton Rascoe: "Likely to be one of the most closely read and most hotly discussed novels of the year. The question will be: Is the hero a heel, only half a heel or a sensitive idealist? But there will be no question about the heroine—she is a darling in heart and mind. A most unusual, fast-moving and suspenseful story of the achievement of emotional maturity—too late—by a hard-boiled, go-getting young cynic."

William Rose Benet: "Frederick Laing writes with pace and toughness of methods in American business studied at first hand. The girl his 'hero' pursues through the story is courageously American. The ambition, lack of scruple, and amorous infantilism of Floyd Sheldon's final surrender to the business system is social and economic criticism of a searingly personal kind."

You can have either one of these books for only $1.00—over 60% less than the regular published price—by joining the MEN'S DOLLAR BOOK GUILD.

MEN'S DOLLAR BOOK GUILD

Yes- Only one dollar will bring you either one of these truly great stories for men.

Note: You are not obligated, as in the case of many book clubs, to buy three, four, or six additional books! This is a special introductory, one-time offer, good only while our limited supplies last. At no cost or obligation to you, also, your name will be added to the list of the MEN'S DOLLAR BOOK GUILD and you will receive special notifications sent out on forthcoming book bargains. This service is entirely free and will not obligate you in any way. Send $1.00 for one book or $2.00 for both. NOW, before our supply is exhausted. **FILL IN THE COUPON TODAY!**

MEN'S DOLLAR BOOK GUILD
Suite 2005, Dept. D
205 E. 42nd St., New York 17, N. Y.

Enclosed please find ($1.00 ☐) ($2.00 ☐). Please send me:

☐ RUN FOR YOUR LIFE (Published at $3.50)
☐ SIX SECONDS A YEAR (Published at $3.00)

This does not obligate me in any way to buy further books.

Name .....

Street and Number.....

City..... Zone..... State.....

HEART ATTACK OR INDIGESTION?

THANK HEAVENS! Most attacks are just acid indigestion. When it strikes, take Bell-ans tablets. They contain the fastest-acting medicines known to doctors for the relief of heartburn, gas and similar distress. Send postal to Bell & Co., Orangeburg, N. Y. for free lucky rabbits' foot and sample of Bell-ans.

RITE-NOW PENCIL HOLDER

Keeps pencil handy "Rite-now" where needed. Easily attached without tools to telephones, typewriters, adding machines, office desks, auto panels, kitchen cabinets, etc. Attractive, durable, inexpensive time and temper saver. Price 25c postpaid, five for dollar. Guaranteed.

RITE-NOW PRODUCTS CO.
404 Bank America Bldg., Glendale 4, Calif.

START YOUR OWN BUSINESS

on credit. Your own boss. 1437 Dealers sold $5,000 to $28,500 in 1950; their average $6,704. We supply stocks, equipment on credit. 200 home necessities. Selling experience unnecessary to start. Wonderful opportunity to own pleasant, profitable business backed by world wide industry. Write RAWLEIGH'S, DEPT. L-U-PBL, Freeport, Illinois.

MONEY IN ANIMALS!

MAKE YOUR HOBBY PAY!

Start Profitable full time or part time animal business. Let famous animal man show you 130 ways to turn your love of animals into cash!

SEND $1.00 FOR INSTRUCTIONS

ANIMAL LOVERS ASSOCIATION
BOX 6157 -- TARZANA, CALIFORNIA

$200 A WEEK INCOME ASSURED

No Selling. Profit-tested idea with unique approach. First time offered. Different! Details $1.00.

LURENE BUSINESS PLANS
Dept. 767, P. O. Box 4692 San Francisco, Calif.

— MONEY FOR YOU —

We pay $2 to $500 Each for HUNDREDS of Old or Odd Coins. INDIAN HEAD, LINCOLN and FOREIGN COINS wanted. Keep ALL until posted. Send 20 cents for NEW ILLUSTRATED COIN VALUE BOOK, 4x6. Buying and Selling Prices. 40 years in business.

OLD COIN EXCHANGE, (44) LE ROY, N. Y.

AT LAST—A REVOLUTIONARY NEW HOME SPOT REMOVER

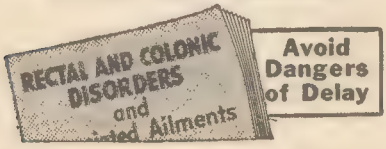
It's Marvelous! It's Magic!

Removes paint, oil, grease, ink, lipstick, tar and other organic and inorganic matter. Safe on all fabrics—safe on all colors—SAFE for home use! Leaves no odor. Send $1.00 for 2 oz. bottle today. Write

WARREN'S SPOT REMOVER
330 N. Cornell Ft. Wayne, Indiana

Learn Facts About Colitis and Piles

FREE BOOK — Explains Causes, Effects and Treatment



Learn about Colon troubles, Stomach conditions, Piles and other rectal conditions. Causes, effects and treatment. 164-page book sent FREE. McCleary Clinic and Hospital, 1249 Elms Blvd., Excelsior Springs, Mo.

(Continued from page 8)

ever sub-chiefs of Black Kettle's, its news to me and many another amateur student of Western history.

Item: If Quanah Parker's combined Kiowa-Comanche-Cheyenne attack against the buffalo hunters at 'Dobe Walls was due to Sand Creek, instead of the buffalo slaughter below the treaty line of Medicine Lodge, I'm way out in left field.

Item: If Captain Jack's Modocs fought in the Lava Beds because of Sand Creek, I'm even farther out in the boondocks than I thought.

Item: If Chief Joseph and the Nez Perce fought the whites because of Sand Creek, I will kiss your foot in Macys window at high noon on Saturday.

Item: To blame the Meeker Massacre by the Utes, or the tragic journey of Dull Knife, or the twisted bodies of countless thousands upon Sand Creek is drawing the long bow too far.

Sand Creek was one entry in the red ledger of the West. It may have confirmed or added good evidence to the premise that any Indian who trusted the white man was a damn fool. But in and of itself, it was but a mosaic fragment in the conflict between a Neolithic civilization and our own industrial-theological complex.

To attribute to it the drastic consequences Mr. Appell gives it in his story and in his letter on page 8, is to my mind misleading. I believe that such personal opinions belong properly in fiction, or with the personal opinion label in the esoteric quarterlies concerned with such matters. I do not believe such belong in a magazine like *Adventure* where readers have long been accustomed to finding straightforward, documented facts presented as such.

A. H. CARHART, George Appell's colleague in our own *Ask Adventure* department, sends in the following comment:

Having written a guide book published some years back on the state of Colorado, which included a lot of historical background, and being a charter member of The Westerners, which is an organization of professional and amateur historians, serving as head man of the Denver *Posse* a couple of years ago, one of the first things I read in September *Adventure* was George C. Appell's account of the Sand Creek battle between the Colorado troops and the Cheyenne-Arapaho Indians. I don't know Appell, his location, his background. And my inclination always is to commend anyone who will dig enough historical dope to do a good fact piece. But I can't let this piece pass without comment.

My first inclination was to sit down and write you the other side of this controversial event. I would yet if you would use it. Not blasting Appell, but trying to

correct a very considerable departure from many facts concerning that event.

It was my privilege to become acquainted with Col. William M. Breakenridge—author of *Helldorado*, a true story of Tombstone's early gunfighting—before the old gentleman passed away. He was famous as one of "the law" in those fights. Also, he was the dispatch carrier for Chivington throughout the movement of the troops to Fort Lyon and was in the Sand Creek fight. Breakenridge was seventeen years of age at the time, and discussed vividly and with detail, in a quiet manner, all that happened at Sand Creek. Naturally, he had the viewpoint of the troops with Chivington. But when I talked with him nearly thirty years ago, he spoke with moderate objectivity. He said positively, that there was not the slaughter of helpless Indians that has been represented. It was a fight, a tough one, with the Indians armed with better guns, and fighting like sixty.

I'll not detail that any more, but can. What I must contest is Appell's statement that the Chivington affair was the spark that set off the Indian wars that followed. It may have been some cause for greater Indian hatreds, but it was a long way from being the cause for the troubles that followed that battle.

After reading Appell's piece, I checked to be certain my memory was in line. I happen to have a number of sound historical references in my library; Smiley, Stone, Bancroft, others. The stink that was kicked up about Chivington was largely due to frontier politics, the inability of the Indian agents of the time to handle the tribes and their recognition of blaming Chivington as a means for laying blame somewhere else, and similar personality-political considerations. The Congressional investigations were loaded to the hilt against Chivington to scuttle him, and they undoubtedly are part of the source Appell used in writing his material.

These facts are clear. For several years before Sand Creek, the plains tribes had been increasing their depredations. Governor Evans of Colorado had repeatedly asked for military to protect settlers, stage lines, wagon trains and the mails. Directly before the Sand Creek business, two or more warnings of inter-tribal plans to start wholesale raids were reported to Evans. They were authenticated as correct. There was evidence that Confederate agents and sympathizers were stirring up the Indians and also supplying them with better arms than the Colorado militia had. This was a diversionary move at a time when the Confederate raid into Missouri was being set up; to tie down all military that could be tied. Evans got no troops; he organized the Colorado military.

Shortly before Sand Creek and this information as to the planned, general Indian outbreaks, the Hungate family, on a ranch 25 miles southeast of Denver, had been

Knowledge That Has Endured With the Pyramids

A SECRET METHOD FOR THE MASTERY OF LIFE

WHENCE came the knowledge that built the Pyramids? Where did the first builders in the Nile Valley acquire their astounding wisdom that started man on his upward climb? Did their knowledge come from a race now submerged beneath the sea? From what concealed source came the wisdom that produced such characters as Amenhotep IV, Leonardo da Vinci, Isaac Newton, and a host of others?

Today it is known that they discovered and used certain *Secret Methods* for the development of their inner power of mind. They truly learned to master life. This secret art of living has been preserved and handed down throughout the ages and today is extended to those who dare use its profound principles to meet and solve the problems of life in these complex times.

This Sealed Book—FREE

The Rosicrucians (not a religious organization) have prepared an unusual book, which will be sent free to sincere inquirers, in which the method of receiving these principles and natural laws is explained. Write *today* for your copy of this sealed book. Possibly it will be the first step whereby you can accomplish many of your secret ambitions and the building of personal achievements . . . Address your inquiry to: Scribe D.G.K.

The Rosicrucians
(AMORC)
San Jose, California

MAKE BIG MONEY PLASTICS LEARN AT HOME

LEARN HOW TO MAKE fast selling PLASTIC NOVELTIES FURNITURE JEWELRY SIGNS TOYS LAMPS

There are RICH OPPORTUNITIES for MEN and WOMEN with "know-how" in Plastics. Interstate's amazing new Plastics course tells and shows how to make hundreds of fast selling items out of Plastics. Gives complete training in fabrication, casting, lamination, molding, etc., in simple, easy, step-by-step language and pictures.

START A PLASTICS BUSINESS OF YOUR OWN. No other industry holds such promise for the future. You can make big money manufacturing novelties, toys, signs, etc., in your own home in spare or full time. Don't wait! Learn NOW how Interstate's Plastics Training qualifies you for success in the plastics field.

Write for FREE Information Today!

INTERSTATE TRAINING SERVICE
School of Plastics
PORTLAND 13, OREGON
Dept. C-11N

BABY LIGHTER
Not a Toy...But a BEAUTIFUL, LONG LASTING PRECISION MADE Small Scale LIGHTER
Sensationally New! Makes a Wonderful Gift
MONEY BACK GUARANTEE IF NOT COMPLETELY SATISFIED
Unbelievable Offer!
(NICKEL *Finish*) $1.00 PREPAID
DE LUXE MODEL (ALLIGATOR COVER) $1.50 PREPAID
QUALITY LIGHTERS 7471 MELROSE AVE., LOS ANGELES 46, CALIF.

TOOTHACHE?
Quick relief with Dent's. Use Dent's Tooth Gum or Dent's Tooth Drops for cavity toothaches. Use Dent's Dental Poultice for pain or soreness in gums or teeth. At all drug stores.
"Since 1888"
DENT'S TOOTH GUM TOOTH DROPS DENTAL POULTICE

HYPNOTISM
Home study course now available at America's oldest school teaching only Hypnotism and Autosuggestion with GUARANTEED RESULTS
"Diploma Issued Upon Completion"
INSTITUTE OF APPLIED HYPNOLOGY
120 Central Park So., N. Y. 19, N. Y.
Free circular upon request. Dept. 21

INVENTORS
If you believe that you have an invention, you should find out how to protect it. We are registered Patent Attorneys. Send for copy of our Patent Booklet "How to Protect Your Invention," and an "Invention Record" form. No obligation. They are yours for the asking.
McMORROW, BERMAN & DAVIDSON
Registered Patent Attorneys
1503 Victor Building Washington 1, D. C.

RUPTURED?
Get Relief This Proven Way
Why try to worry along with trusses that gouge your flesh—press heavily on hips and spine—enlarge opening—fail to hold rupture? You need the Cluthe. No leg-straps or cutting belts. Automatic adjustable pad holds at real opening—follows every body movement with instant increased support in case of strain. Cannot slip whether at work or play. Light. Waterproof. Can be worn in bath. Send for amazing FREE book, "Advice To Ruptured" and details of liberal truthful 60-day trial offer. Also endorsements from grateful users in your neighborhood. Write:
CLUTHE SONS, Dept 15, Bloomfield, New Jersey.

murdered by Indians, grossly mutilated, and bodies had been brought to Denver and exhibited. The Indians had been raiding stage stations, running off horses, stealing anything else. There had been a battle in northeastern Colorado between militia and Indian raiders; some 150 horses recaptured; both Indians and militia killed. Supply trains had been so harassed Denver was short of foodstuffs. For some three years, there had been this record, with increasing depredations and killings by Indians, with the authenticated information that the situation was about to develop into massacre on a wholesale basis. The people were growing desperate. Actually, Chivington had orders from the commander at Fort Riley to go after Kettle's outfit, and similar ones, and wipe them out to stop all this continual warring. So to say that Chivington's act started the Indian battles is far away from the truth.

Furthermore, Kettle's band, while going through the motions of wanting federal protection, was raiding. Kettle admitted it—said it was the hot-headed "young men." At the Sand Creek camp, at least 25, and perhaps several times that number, of white scalps were found. Some of them were still moist and bloody. One was that of an auburn-haired woman, which had been yanked off with the whole skull cap complete. Representations that these were good Indians, helpless, innocent, and massacred, just can't be accepted.

That the affair was brutal is admitted. But it was the culmination of several years of brutal raiding by the Indians, and had as a background, the knowledge that the better-armed Indians were ready to make a concerted all-out effort.

Granted that the Sand Creek affair was brutal, there are the above considerations, that simply do not fit in with what Appell has represented. There was no prospect of Indian troubles lessening. Chivington's act may have intensified the situation, but there is the well-established fact that the Indians were about to cut loose with more depredations.

I'm no champion of Chivington. Apparently he was not too admirable a sort in many ways. But he was acting on orders; he had the whole settlement back of him, and there was the strategy of hitting first to prevent the general uprising that was known to be all set to break loose. And in the interest of presenting a balanced, historically correct picture, I must stand up and protest the very one-sided and extreme reporting of the Sand Creek affair that is in current *Adventure*. Certainly, readers look to *Adventure* for the best reporting, the highest accuracy. And in the light of all historical record, this piece by Appell falls far, far short of giving the balanced, objective truth concerning the Sand Creek "massacre," if what Col. Breakenridge clearly says was a tough, no-quarter, hard fought battle can be called a "massacre."

I think there's some obligation on the part of *Adventure* to balance the extreme picture that Appell gave, not whitewashing the affair or the men connected with it, but certainly giving the facts so grossly lacking that would give the balanced picture.

And all of this is in the interest of keeping the record reasonably straight. The misrepresentation of the Sand Creek affair that has been printed is as highly colored and distorted as the inspired blather that paints William Bonney as a glamor boy when he was, in fact, an early-day dead-end kid.

CAN anyone lend a hand to Mr. Sidney A. Berkeley, who sends in the following SOS? While Mr. Berkeley is in real distress—as you will readily agree upon reading of his deprivation—his position is not uncharted. He may be reached at 1041 North La Jolla Avenue, Hollywood 46, California.

At one time *Adventure* magazine performed the service function of printing the names of those who had or who wanted back issues of your magazine.

I would like to obtain back issues of *Adventure* 1935 and before, especially those of the 1920's. I have already covered the commercial sources in my own area.

Would you please print my name in order that any other readers who have these magazines can contact me. Thank you.

A FEW words here about a contributor to the present issue. Poul Anderson, whose *Son of the Sword* leads this month's fiction parade, is a Viking type and comes by it and the off-trail spelling of his name honestly, being of Scandinavian origin.

In typically adventurous fashion, he became a writer by first becoming a graduate physicist. He confesses to a fantastic range of interests, running from camping in the wilds through blondes, redheads and brunettes, late hours, Greek and Egyptian literature, music, to a sea-going sailboat. Currently he's around somewhere—nobody knows just where.

Seeing the world. But since the earth is round, he's bound to return—we hope with another yarn for *Adventure*.

And that, gentlemen, just about tears it. We're hung up on the deadline and the blaze is sputtering out. We'll light it again.

EGJ

WORK SHIRT BARGAIN

FREE 10-DAY TRIAL

What a Buy! These are surplus stock from a big supply firm. Sturdy, serviceable work shirts, though used, have been washed, sterilized and reconditioned. Every shirt of long-wearing wash materials. Blue, tan, white. Strongly sewn; reinforced stitching at points of strain. Money back guarantee with every order!

79c

3 FOR 2.29

WORK PANTS TO MATCH....99c
Blue, Tan, White. Measure waist; leg.

COVERALLS.....1.95 (3 for 5.49)
Blue, Tan, White. Send chest measure.

WHITE SHOPCOATS, 1.79 (3 for 5.00)
Send chest measure.

SEND NO MONEY! Give name, address, city or town, size and color choice, (also state 2nd color choice). Pay postman plus postage. Or, send Cash, Check, or Money Order and we ship prepaid. Keep 10 days. Return for full refund of purchase price if not fully satisfied. Order TODAY at Our Risk!

YOUNG PRODUCTS Dept. T
3605 ELMHURST • DETROIT 9, MICH.

A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA the EASY WAYNE WAY

● The quick, low-cost WAYNE way to a High School education. No classes; pleasant, spare-time home training; college preparatory; standard texts; credit for past schooling. If you have finished 8th grade and are over 17 years of age, write for free catalog.

WAYNE SCHOOL
2527 SHEFFIELD AVENUE
Catalog HC-2, CHICAGO 14, ILL.

PLAY GUITAR IN 7 DAYS OR GET YOUR MONEY BACK

ED SALE, TOP RADIO GUITARIST, TEACHER OF HUNDREDS OF GUITARISTS, PROFESSIONALS, WILL POSITIVELY TEACH YOU TO PLAY A BEAUTIFUL SONG THE FIRST DAY! AND ANY SONG BY EAR OR NOTE IN 7 DAYS! His 64 page secret system contains 52 life size photographs, 47 chord and finger placing charts along with complete easy to learn instructions on— How to tune, build chords, keep time, bass runs, dance chords, swing, over 100 learn-quick examples, etc, plus 50 Popular and Western songs with 1st, 2nd, 3rd guitar, words and music. ABSOLUTELY NO previous music knowledge needed! Imagine how surprised and proud your friends will be when they hear you play their favorite songs on the guitar. SEND NO MONEY: Just name and address to ED SALE and pay postman $1.59 plus C.O.D. and postage or send $1.59 and I pay postage. $1.59

ED SALE Dept. PF-12 Point Pleasant, N. J.

WHO'S WHO IN RAILROADING

IN NORTH AMERICA

Think of it . . . the Eleventh Edition of this blue book of railroading personnel famous since 1885, now available to readers of Railroad Magazine at this saving.

50% PRICE SLASH
now only
$3.00
Plus 15c for postage and handling

Concise biographical sketches of 5,650 leaders in all phases of railroading. Professional and personal data included.

Order today with check or money order from

QUALITY AGENCY

270 Park Ave. New York 17, N. Y.

Free Book
MOUNT BIRDS, ANIMALS, FISH

MAIL Postal Today

Yes, FREE. Explains Taxidermy. Tells how to learn at home by mail to mount birds, animals, heads . . . to TAN skins and furs. Great for MEN and BOYS. Fun! Also earn money in spare time. WRITE TODAY—NOW—for **free** book containing 100 game pictures. State AGE. **N.W. School of Taxidermy, Dept. 4212, Omaha, Neb.**

OPPORTUNITIES AHEAD!
TRAIN FOR A FUTURE IN
DIESEL

Prepare for the big earning power of **Diesel Trained Men.** Start learning at home, in spare time. UEI's easy, practical training covers all phases of DIESEL engine operation, fuel systems, auxiliary equipment, repairs and maintenance. Also new Scientific Auto Motor Tune-up. After home course, you come to Chicago for actual practice in UEI's modern shop under experienced instructors. GET ALL THE FACTS FREE. WRITE TODAY!

DIESEL DIVISION **UTILITIES ENGINEERING INSTITUTE**
2521 Sheffield Ave., Dept. DL-5 Chicago 14, Illinois

For Sports—For Fun
World's Finest "EM-GE"
BLANK PISTOL

"Shoot the Works"—safely—with this handsome blank pistol. Looks and sounds real enough for the FBI. But it can't hold regular cartridges. Six-shot magazine; safety catch. Precision-built of carbon steel. 8¼" long. A world-famous pistol, excellent value at $10.95

De luxe model with pearl handle $15.00
100 blank cartridges
$1.50
ORDER BY MAIL
No Permit Required.
Send Check or Money Order
Dealer Inquiries Invited
J. L. Galef & Son, Dept. FG-2, 85 Chambers St., N.Y.C.

(Continued from page 99)

the sky, empty-mouthed and dusty. For the rest, Abel was hidden by the rocks, only one boot protruding into sight.

Jess Lucey thumbed back the hammer and fired again. Rock dust spurted up by the boot, but nothing moved but the dancing little heat devils. Again he fired, and missed, and the roaring echoes of the shot faded away in a ripple of sound far up the wash. He was shaking suddenly, and running his rough tongue over his lips, and blinking his red eyes frantically.

The gun shook in his hand, and little ripples ran up and down his back. Again he fired, but the heat devils made him miss the boot again. The great fire of the sun was directly overhead now, and it was clubbing at him, beating him down, and he could feel the blisters rising on his burning neck. He scrambled to his knees, crouched, moved down on the gully.

He had to see.

His feet plowed long furrows down the side of the wash, and a clattering shower of shale and pebbles went before him. The dust boiled around him as he stopped, straddled wide, in the oven heat of the gully. The view was changed here. Across the intervening boulders he could see the bulging side of the downed horse, and one stirrup thrown back across the saddle.

He came past the horse, and his eyes automatically told him that the slug had cut a thumb-deep groove across the animal's head on its way to Abel Bane's chest.

Then he stopped. Yonder the rocks where Abel Bane lay. He took a deep, shuddering breath, brought up the gun and took the last three strides. Then a deep warning bell rang far back in his mind.

Abel Bane sat, braced against a boulder, the shoulder of his shirt red-black with drying blood. But his eyes were open, those blank, gray-granite eyes, and the gun was very steady in his hand.

"Hello, Lucey," he said softly.

Jess made a sound in his throat and twitched up his gun.

"Too late, Lucey," said Abel Bane.

The last thing Jess Lucey saw was the rose-red bloom of flame that grew from the gun muzzle of Abel Bane. The roar of the gun bounced back and forth up the burning walls of the gully and was lost in the empty land.

LOST TRAILS

NOTE: We offer this department to readers who wish to get in touch again with friends or acquaintances separated by years or chance. Give your own name and full address. Please notify *Adventure* immediately should you establish contact with the person you are seeking. Space permitting, each inquiry addressed to *Last Trails* will be run in three consecutive issues. Requests by and concerning women are declined as not considered effective in a magazine published for men. *Adventure* also will decline any notice that may not seem a sincere effort to recover an old friendship, or that may not seem suitable to the editors for any other reason. No charge is made for publication of notices.

Would very much like to get any news concerning Arthur Carl last heard of in Miami in 1922. He served with me in the English Machine Gun Corps during World War I in France. He left England after the War for the U.S.A. and was making good in Miami when suddenly all news from him stopped. Colonel G. Gauntlett, 18 Vine Road, East Molesey, Surrey, England.

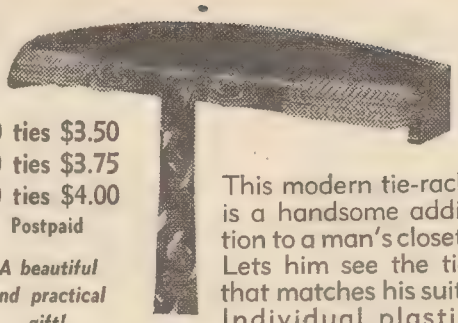
Information wanted about Camerond Cox. Was in Rhyolite, Nevada in 1906. Write R. E. Ware, Clemson, S. C.

As a matter of interest I would like to hear from anyone who knew Corporal Francis D. Howard, Company A, 109th Infantry. 28th Division. Killed in action July 16, 1918 at Chateau-Thiery. H. Thorne Arnold, 221 E. 46th St., New York 17, N. Y.

Sweeck, Joseph E., U.S. soldier, U.S. sailor. According to War Dept. Records was discharged from U.S.S. Denver on Pacific coast 1917. Gave as his forwarding address, 255 Shelton Ave., New Haven, Conn. Never arrived. May be amnesia victim. A reward will be paid for proof of his existence or evidence of his death. Please write Tom E. Long, Box 203, Key West, Florida.

Would like to get in touch with Walter Narton, deep-sea diver on the battleship Arkansas in World War One. The family once lived in Springfield, Mass. Please notify Dawes Alward, Box 868, Waterford, N. Y.

I would like to make contact with an old friend in Lost Trails. I would appreciate it if any one knowing the whereabouts of Dewey Kornégay would contact me. We were shipmates for three years on the cruiser U.S.S. Milwaukee during the war. The last I heard of him he was on the U.S.S. Montauck, in 1944. Contact Jack D. Mays GM3 USNR #266-13-82, U.S. Naval Hospital, Navy 961 Box 8, c/o F.P.O. San Francisco, California.



30 ties $3.50
40 ties $3.75
50 ties $4.00
Postpaid

A beautiful and practical gift!

This modern tie-rack is a handsome addition to a man's closet. Lets him see the tie that matches his suit. Individual plastic hangers threaded on chrome bar. Sturdy plastic mahogany back 15" long holds 30 to 50 ties.

BELDING NOVELTIES, Dept. F1

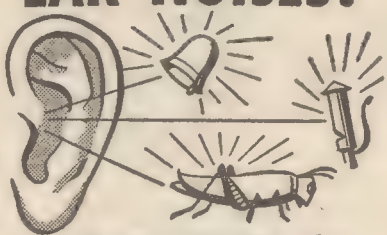
1372 West 111 St. Cleveland 2, Ohio

EAT ANYTHING WITH FALSE TEETH

If you have trouble with plates that slip and rock and cause sore gums — try Brimms Plasti-Liner. One application makes plates fit *snugly and stay that way,* because Brimms Plasti-Liner is a permanent reliner. It relines and refits loose plates in a way no powder or paste can do. Even on old rubber plates you get good results six months to a year or longer. **YOU CAN EAT ANYTHING!** Simply lay soft strip of Plasti-Liner on troublesome upper or lower. Bite and it molds perfectly. *Easy to use,* tasteless, odorless, harmless to you and your plates. Removable if desired. Money back if not completely satisfied. *Ask your druggist!*

BRIMMS PLASTI-LINER
THE PERMANENT DENTURE RELINER

EAR NOISES?



If you suffer from those miserable ear noises and are Hard of Hearing due to catarrh of the head, write us NOW for proof of the good results many people have reported after using our simple home treatment. NOTHING TO WEAR. Many past 70 report ear noises relieved and hearing improved. ***SEND NOW FOR PROOF AND 30 DAYS TRIAL OFFER.***

THE ELMO CO.
DEPT. 2PF9 DAVENPORT, IOWA

New Amazing Wonderful Gem
DIAMOTHYST
Far more brilliant than
DIAMONDS

$24 Per Carat

Harder than zircons, keep their brilliance forever.
Diamothyst is .7 on the *Moh's* scale of hardness, and *diamonds* are .9.

The greatest gem discovery in history, which is the result of experimentation of one of America's largest corporations, brings you *Diamothyst*, a gem with a refractory index higher than, and a disperion factor greater than a *diamond*. Its refractory index is about 10% higher than *diamonds*. It may seem fantastic to you as it did to us, but now you can have a gem that looks like a *diamond* and is actually far more brilliant than a *diamond*, and even many PAWNBROKERS have mistaken it for a real *diamond*. Yet you can have it at about 1/30 the cost of a genuine diamond. (Buy a Diamothyst instead of a *diamond* and save the difference.)

Only $24 a carat, tax included. The hundreds of dollars thus saved will go far toward buying a home. You need no longer invest large sums of money in a tiny stone, the value of which is determined largely by *scarcity* and *control*. YOU can enjoy the beauty and prestige and the envy of your friends with a stone that only an *expert* working under a *good light* can detect as not being a real *diamond*.

PAWN-BROKERS, ATTENTION:

We urgently recommend that you order a sample of this amazing product to have in your shop for comparison with a genuine *diamond*. Many *pawnbrokers* have paid out money under the impression that they were loaning on *diamonds* when in reality, the people were offering *Diamothyst*.

COMPARE:

REFRACTORY INDEX OF DIAMOTHYST IS BETWEEN 2.62 and 2.90 as compared to DIAMOND'S 2.42. DISPERSION OF DIAMOTHYST RANGES BETWEEN 0.155 and 0.205 in comparison to the DIAMOND'S 0.025.

a. FISHTAIL STYLE with *Diamothyst* gem

1 carat..... $42.00
2 carats..... 66.00
3 carats..... 90.00
4 carats..... 114.00

b. MODERN GYPSY with *Diamothyst* gem

1 carat $65.00
2 carats 89.00
3 carats..... 113.00

c. PRINCESS EARRINGS

Please note the illustration here of the new wing-type safety mounting that is so easy to put on and so very comfortable to wear. Please specify in your order if you wish earrings for pierced ears. There is no extra cost. $84.00 pair

d. BOX STYLE with *Diamothyst* gem

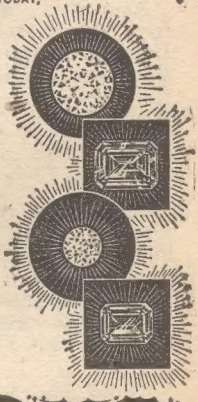
1 carat.. $60.00
2 carats.. 84.00
3 carats. 108.00

e. GOLD CHAIN AND CROSS with 9 *Diamothyst* gems.... $75.00

A beautiful engagement ring made with a *Diamothyst* presented to any girl will inspire her devotion. You can buy many things with the hundreds of dollars thus saved. Each *Diamothyst* is perfectly cut, with full 58 facets per brilliant stone. Legally we cannot refer to the *Diamothyst* as a *diamond*, so we ask you to order in the 3 most popular *diamond* shapes — namely the round or *BRILLIANT*, the oblong or *EMERALD* and the oval or *MARQUISE* cuts.

You may order these gems for setting by your local, friendly, trustworthy jeweler, who will be glad to verify your purchase, or you can order them in the mountings shown above.

FREE There is no charge for mounting *Diamothysts* in Your Jewelry —they will be mounted absolutely *FREE!*



MONEY BACK GUARANTEE WITH A 30-DAY TRIAL IN YOUR HOME.

YOU ARE THE SOLE JUDGE

In this advertisement, you are assured, that if you are dissatisfied for any reason whatsoever, you may return the Diamothyst for 100% CASH REFUND WITHOUT QUESTION!

You can order the— in 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 —up to 10 carats at $24 a carat.

Take the price of the rings shown above in the 1 carat size and add $24 for each additional carat you want. ORDER TODAY, DON'T DELAY!

HOW TO MEASURE FINGER SIZE

(1) Cut flat, stiff cardboard into a long, narrow wedge. Take ring that fits and is not bent; (2) Slip it over narrow end of card until it stops—do not force. Draw lines at both sides of ring. Send us the cardboard. Do not send your own ring; nor use string to measure.

REGAL GEM CO., Dept. 110, 318 Market St., Newark, New Jersey

Yes! Please rush my selection of DIAMOTHYST gems as I have indicated below. If not delighted, I may return them within 10 days for full refund. My finger size is.....

☐ I enclose $5. I will pay postman balance plus postage.

☐ I enclose full price, send postage prepaid.

MOUNTED GEMS:
- ☐ A. 1 Carat Diamothyst Fishtail style set in 14-kt. white gold mounting $42.00
- ☐ B. 1 Carat Modern Gypsy with DIAMOTHYST Gem set in 14-kt. white or yellow gold mounting $65.00
- ☐ C. 1 Carat Princess Earrings $84.00
- ☐ D. 1 Carat Diamothyst set in masculine Box Style white or yellow gold mounting. $60.00
- ☐ E. Gold Chain and Cross with 9 Diamothyst Gems $75.00
- ☐ Pendant with gold chain, 1 carat Diamothyst, only $65.00

EACH ADDITIONAL CARAT $24. style as shown on model

UNMOUNTED GEMS: ☐ 1 Carat $24.00 ☐ 2 Carat $48.00 ☐ 3 Carat $72.00, etc.
EACH ADDITIONAL CARAT $24.

NOTE: A $5 deposit must accompany each C.O.D. order. All prices tax included.

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

CITY..... Zone..... State.....

NOTE: If you don't know ring size, send thin strip of paper. **SENT ON APPROVAL**

WOULD YOU LIKE TO GET PAID FOR "GIVING AWAY" FIRST QUALITY FULL FASHIONED NYLONS AT 49¢?

REPLACEMENT OR A REFUND OF MONEY
Guaranteed by Good Housekeeping
IF NOT AS ADVERTISED THEREIN

Imagine the money you can make! Sounds impossible, but that's all they cost if they run or snag within guarantee period up to THREE WHOLE MONTHS! What's more, this amazing low cost INCLUDES your commission, huge bonus and even the postage! Here is a miracle come true!

This isn't selling. It's giving something away. Yet, YOU get paid for doing it! Yes, you not only pocket an advance liberal cash commission but can easily earn a big bonus that increases your earnings up to 40%.

Women today buy over TWO MILLION PAIRS of nylons EVERY DAY. Many women average a pair a week. Stockings are bought more often than any other type of wearing apparel. Think how delighted any woman would be to learn about the amazing Kendex nylons.

It makes no difference whether you ever sold before or not. We don't care if you are 18 or 80—whether you have one hour or 50 hours a week to spare. You can make a wonderful steady income either full or spare time.

FREE SAMPLE STOCKING

Date.....

Kendex Corporation
Babylon 69, N. Y.

Send me, absolutely free and postage prepaid, your complete money-making outfit including free sample stocking. It is understood I am under no obligation and if I am not satisfied with the money I make, I will throw away the whole outfit.

Name.....

Address.....

City..... Zone.... State.....

.....

There is nothing for you to buy or deliver. You don't risk a dime. Pay nothing now or later. Just mail the coupon, that's all. We'll send you FREE SAMPLE STOCKING and complete money-making outfit postage prepaid. Show women how they can save at least half of their hosiery cost and write orders. We deliver and collect. Could anything be easier? If you don't make money quicker and easier than you ever did, throw the whole works away! Can we say more?

KENDEX
CORPORATION
BABYLON 69, N.Y.

A SENSATIONAL BARGAIN FOR NEW MEMBERS OF THE ADVENTURE BOOK CLUB!

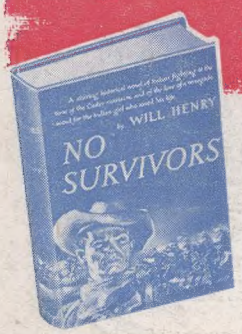
CHOOSE ANY 4 ADVENTURE HITS FOR $1!

when you join

Full-Size, Hard-Bound Books!

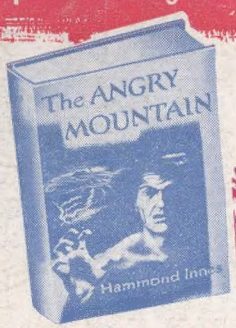
Tops in Exciting Fiction! Up to $11.00 Value!

New Best-Sellers! All-Time Favorites! "Big-Name" Authors!



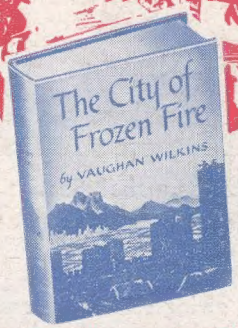
1. NO SURVIVORS —Will Henry

Why did this educated white man turn renegade—to become Walking Hawk, most feared and ruthless killer among the savage Sioux Indians?



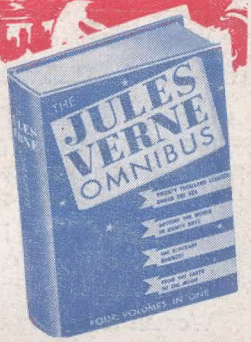
2. THE ANGRY MOUNTAIN —Hammond Innes

The gripping story of six frightened people, trapped between a desperate murderer and an erupting volcano! By the author of **The Survivors.**



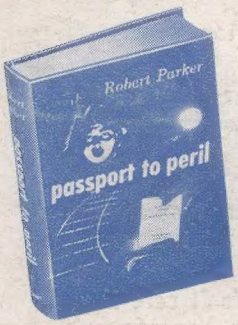
3. THE CITY OF FROZEN FIRE —Vaughan Wilkins

A fabulous island empire at the end of the world, where lay a fortune for those brave enough to win it—death for those who failed!



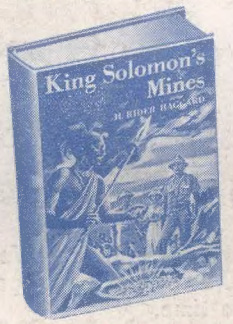
4. THE JULES VERNE OMNIBUS

800 pages—4 complete novels! **20,000 Leagues Under the Sea, Around the World in 80 Days, The Blockade Runners, From the Earth to the Moon.**



5. PASSPORT TO PERIL —Robert Parker

To get behind the Iron Curtain, Stodder had to assume the identity of a dead spy —a spy who was expected by the dreaded Secret Police!



6. KING SOLOMON'S MINES —Rider Haggard

The most exciting novel ever written about Africa—the story of three men and a fortune guarded by an ancient curse!

7. SHINING MOUNTAINS —Steve Frazee

Thirty men started across the Shining Mountains. Somewhere in those icy crags they would battle nature, death—and one another!

MAIL THIS COUPON

Adventure Book Club, Dept. 12PFG. Garden City, New York

Please enroll me in the Adventure Book Club. Send me at once the 4 books whose numbers I have circled below, and bill me ONLY $1 FOR ALL 4, plus few cents shipping cost.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I am to receive free the Club Bulletin, **Adventure Trails**, so I may decide in advance which future selections I want to accept. I need take only four books a year out of the 24 action novels offered, and I pay only the bargain price of $1 each, plus few cents shipping and handling, for books I accept. After accepting four books, I may cancel my membership at any time.

Please Print

Name .....

Address .....

City & Zone ..... State .....

(THIS OFFER GOOD ONLY IN THE U. S.)

WHY WE OFFER THIS EXTRAORDINARY BARGAIN

IT'S to introduce you to the new kind of club for men you've always wanted! Each month the editors of the Adventure Book Club select the most exciting novels of adventure—action—suspense! These books sell for as much as $3.00 in the publishers' editions, but you get them for only $1 each!

Relax the Way Famous Celebrities Do —with an Adventure Novel!

You get the headliners in adventure fiction — by the most famous authors—in variety to suit every taste for thrills! Frontier novels, stories of adventure in the arctic and in the jungle, spy thrillers, action on land and sea and in the air!

Take as Few as Four Books a Year!

You do not have to accept every selection—just *four* books a year from at least 24 books offered. After purchasing four books, at only $1 each, you can cancel your membership anytime!

Mail Coupon Now!

Receive at once any 4 adventure books on this page for only $1, plus shipping cost! When you get this big package of thrills, and realize it is just a *sample* of the treats in store for you, you will be delighted!

ADVENTURE BOOK CLUB
GARDEN CITY, NEW YORK

SCAN COURTSEY OF
EXCITER